Volume 83 No. 10 January 2019 £4.50

www.chess.co.uk

Chess

ISSN 0964-6221

Caru Couldn't - After 12 draws, Magnus proved too strong come the rapid tie-break

Late Drama - Jonathan Speelman examines the dramatic endgames from the match

Christmas Fun - Festive quiz, Seasonal reading & John Henderson's White Christmas

VISIT…

NEW IN CHESS Bestsellers

NEW!

Better Thinking Better Chess
How a Grandmaster Finds his Moves
Joel Benjamin 224 pages - £24.95

Finding strong moves doesn't simply depend on how much you know about chess. More important is optimizing your thought process. Joel Benjamin does what your chess engine can't: he explains why club players take so many wrong turns during a game. By applying a grandmaster's train of thought you will more often arrive at strong moves and substantially improve your game.

Keep it Simple: 1.e4
A Solid and Straightforward Chess Opening Repertoire for White
Christof Sielecki 375 pages - £26.95

Straightforward variations, outside mainstream opening theory (but occasionally played by GMs), always picking the lines that are most uncomfortable for your opponent, easy to learn, easy to remember, requiring little or no maintenance. Because IM Sielecki keeps things simple, it is easy to make your opponent's life difficult.

NEW!

NEW!

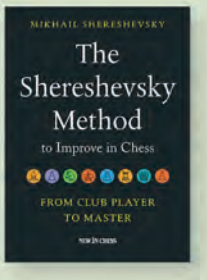
Test Your Chess Skills
Practical Decisions in Critical Moments
Sarhan & Logman Guliev 180 pages - £17.99

The test positions, unknown outside the former Soviet Union, cover the entire spectrum of what a modern club player should know. Find tactical blows, deep strategic manoeuvres, opening traps, standard endgame plans and other principles in action. Each solution of the 224 tests is a detailed, practical and to-the-point lesson, always offering a helpful general conclusion.

Clinch It!
How to Convert an Advantage into a Win in Chess
Cyrus Lakdawala 256 pages - £24.95

IM Lakdawala has identified dozens of reasons why we see wins turn into draws or even losses. Learn how to efficiently exploit a development lead, capitalize on an attack, identify and convert favourable imbalances, accumulate strategic advantages and other tools to increase your conversion rate. With compelling examples and captivating and often funny explanations.

NEW!



The Shereshevsky Method to Improve in Chess
From Club Player to Master
Mikhail Shereshevsky 352 pages - £25.95

"A must for all chess trainers and chess players who wish to improve their performance, because it covers all the skills a good chess player needs." – *International Master Dirk Schuh*

"New In Chess scored a bit of a coup getting this book." *Mark Crowther, editor of The Week In Chess*

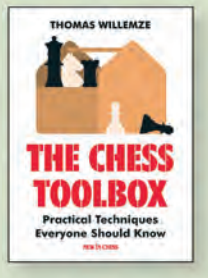
"Well done, New In Chess! Now sign up the author for another book, as soon as possible." – *Sean Marsh, CHESS Magazine*

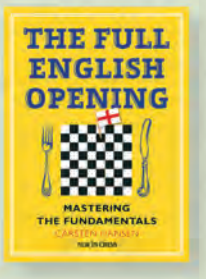
The Chess Toolbox
Practical Techniques Everyone Should Know
Thomas Willemze 400 pages - £22.95

A no-nonsense guide with lots of fascinating examples and hundreds of instructive exercises.

"I can't think of another book that would be more helpful to the average player." – *IM John Watson*

"A truly superb learning guide for club players." *GM Matthew Sadler*





The Full English Opening
Mastering the Fundamentals
Carsten Hansen 464 pages - £26.95

The first one-volume book that covers all variations.

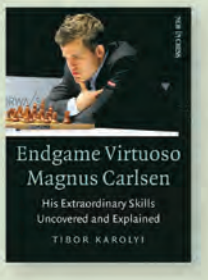
"Currently the best guide on the market. Hansen has clearly put in an amazing amount of work into this book." – *IM Kevin Goh Wein Ming*

"A thorough grounding, where the subtleties of the move orders are carefully weighed up, as are the various counters by Black." – *GM Glenn Flear, Yearbook*

Play 1...d6 Against Everything
A Compact and Ready-to-use Black Repertoire for Club Players
Erik Zude & Jörg Hickl 208 pages - £20.99

Develop your position with strong standard moves and start effective counterplay. Zude and Hickl explain all typical characteristics and give practical examples.

"Very useful for club players and casual players looking for a well-explained and complete opening repertoire." *Uwe Bekemann, German Correspondence Chess*



Endgame Virtuoso Magnus Carlsen
His Extraordinary Skills Uncovered and Explained
Tibor Karolyi 272 pages - £22.95

"A real gem!" *GM Karsten Müller, author of 'Fundamental Chess Endings'*

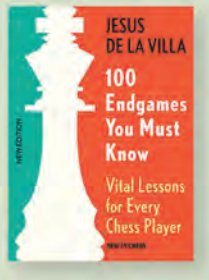
"A fantastic book." – *IM Dirk Schuh*

"Karolyi has a pleasant style of analysing: objective, not too many variations, with plenty of diagrams." *IM Hans Bohm, De Telegraaf, NL*

100 Endgames You Must Know
Vital Lessons for Every Chess Player
Jesus de la Villa 254 pages - £20.99

"If you've never read an endgame book before, this is the one you should start with." *GM Matthew Sadler, former British Champion*

"If you really have no patience for endgames, at least read *100 Endgames You Must Know*." *Gary Walters Chess*



available at the London Chess Centre - www.chess.co.uk/shop

Chess

Founding Editor: B.H. Wood, OBE. M.Sc †
Executive Editor: Malcolm Pein
Editors: Richard Palliser, Matt Read
Associate Editor: John Saunders
Subscriptions Manager: Paul Harrington

Twitter: @CHESS_Magazine
Twitter: @TelegraphChess - Malcolm Pein
Website: www.chess.co.uk

Subscription Rates:

United Kingdom

1 year (12 issues)	£49.95
2 year (24 issues)	£89.95
3 year (36 issues)	£125

Europe

1 year (12 issues)	£60
2 year (24 issues)	£112.50
3 year (36 issues)	£165

USA & Canada

1 year (12 issues)	$90
2 year (24 issues)	$170
3 year (36 issues)	$250

Rest of World (Airmail)

1 year (12 issues)	£72
2 year (24 issues)	£130
3 year (36 issues)	£180

Distributed by:
Post Scriptum (UK only),
Unit G, OYO Business Park, Hindmans Way,
Dagenham, RM9 6LN - Tel: 020 8526 7779

LMPI (North America)
8155 Larrey Street, Montreal (Quebec),
H1J 2L5, Canada - Tel: 514 355-5610

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editors. Contributions to the magazine will be published at the Editors' discretion and may be shortened if space is limited.

No parts of this publication may be reproduced without the prior express permission of the publishers.

All rights reserved. © 2018

Chess Magazine (ISSN 0964-6221) is published by:
Chess & Bridge Ltd, 44 Baker St, London, W1U 7RT
Tel: 020 7288 1305 Fax: 020 7486 7015
Email: info@chess.co.uk, Website: www.chess.co.uk

FRONT COVER:
Cover Design: Matt Read
Cover image: Tao Bhokanandh/CHESS Magazine

US & Canadian Readers – You can contact us via our American branch – Chess4Less based in West Palm Beach, FL. Call toll-free on 1-877 89CHESS (24377). You can even order Subscriber Special Offers online via www.chess4less.com

Printed in the UK by The Magazine Printing Company using only paper from FSC/PEFC suppliers www.magprint.co.uk

Contents

Editorial 4
Malcolm Pein on the latest developments in the game

60 Seconds with...Harriet Hunt 7
Britain's no.1 female player has some sage advice

Late Drama 8
Jon Speelman explores some of the endgames from the WCC match

Caru Can't 13
Fabiano Caruana complicated well, but missed a big chance in Game 8

Chess - A Spectator Sport? 14
Ben Graff visited the match to see if it trumped watching online

Chess for Common People 16
Tim Wall shares the joys of the packed press room during Game 12

A Royal Occasion 18
Peter Lord witnessed Shreyas Royal's first clock simul in Uxbridge

A Year in Review 20
Sean Marsh presents more of the best works of 2018

No Moves 24
Matthew Lunn found his opponent tied up in knots from the opening

How Good is Your Chess? 26
Daniel King was impressed by Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu

White Christmas 30
John Henderson sits down to enjoy a Christmas classic

Another Christmas Carol 32
A new ghost story of Christmas, by James Essinger

Readers' Letters 35

Boxed History 36
Bob Jones presents the unusual story of not just one Walter Stephens

Christmas Chess Quiz 39
In need of some festive distraction? Try and solve these puzzlers!

Forthcoming Events 40

Christmas Reading 42
Ben Graff presents his favourite chess memoirs

Never Mind the Grandmasters... 44
Carl Portman's yule tiding greetings include some fine sorcery

Find the Winning Moves 46
Can you do as well as the players at the opening 4NCL weekend?

Overseas News 50
Ding Liren and Ju Wenjun both had Novembers to remember

Home News 52
Gediminas Sarakauskas won the British Rapidplay in Ilkley

Solutions 53

This Month's New Releases 55
Two new, long-awaited DVDs come under the microscope

Saunders on Chess 58
John reflects on the big match and ponders what might change

Photo credits: Martin Elvery (p.19, right), Dylan Mize (p.15), Lennart Ootes (p.52), John Saunders (pp.5, 7, 27), John Stubbs (p.16-17), @ugrachess/FIDE (pp.6, 51), World Chess (pp.6, 9, 10, 12, 58).

Chess Editorial

By Executive Editor, IM Malcolm Pein @TelegraphChess

Rapid Fire Magnus figures the odds

WCC match victory number four ensured Magnus Carlsen remains world champion for another two years as he finally got the better of Fabiano Caruana in his favourite terrain of Rapid chess. Magnus did not look in the best shape at some points in the match. Quite aside from missing wins in game one as we saw last month, he was also lost in game eight, although it would have taken study-like play to find the win, as Jon Speelman demonstrates inside with his customary lucidity.

Neither player achieved much with the white pieces and there was an outcry when Magnus decided to agree a draw in a better position in game twelve and take the battle to a tie-break. I was very surprised the champ missed all his chances to play ...b7-b5 – on a couple of occasions this idea was very strong.

Post-victory the World Champion wandered in to Wetherspoons - which happened to be the same pub that Kevin Sweeney and his Wanstead & Woodford clubmates were drinking in after a London League match. No wonder it was smiles all around!

F.Caruana-M.Carlsen
World Championship (Game 12), London 2018
Sicilian Pelikan

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e5 6 ♘db5 d6 7 ♘d5 ♘xd5 8 exd5 ♘e7

8...♘b8 was played in games eight and ten, as we'll see inside.

9 c4 ♘g6 10 ♕a4 ♗d7 11 ♕b4 ♗f5 12 h4 h5 13 ♕a4

If 13 ♗e3 a6 14 ♘c3 ♕c7.

13...♗d7 14 ♕b4 ♗f5

Carlsen was still moving quickly, as Caruana started to fall well behind on the clock.

15 ♗e3

15 ♕a4 forcing a draw was out of the question, or at least one hopes it was.

15...a6 16 ♘c3 ♕c7 17 g3 ♗e7

White had a huge choice here. Perhaps 18 ♕a4+ ♗d7 19 ♕b3 was best, since if 18 ♗b6 ♕c8 19 ♗g2 ♘f8! and Black seems to be OK.

18 f3 ♘f8! 19 ♘e4 ♘d7 20 ♗d3 0-0 21 ♖h2!?

The beginning of a highly original plan that does not work out. After 21 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 22 ♗xf5 ♘c5 23 0-0 e4! Black activates his pieces, but 21 0-0!? ♗h7 22 ♖ae1 f5 23 ♘g5 was probably better as the white king proves to be unsafe on the other wing.

21...♖ac8 22 0-0-0!? ♗g6 23 ♖c2 f5 24 ♘f2

If 24 ♘g5 ♗xg5 25 hxg5 e4 followed by ...♘e5 or ...♘c5 leaves Black very active.

24...♘c5 25 f4

25...a5

25...b5! looked very promising, and if 26 ♗e2 a5 27 ♕d2 b4, which threatens ...b4-b3! and Black is doing very well.

26 ♕d2 e4 27 ♗e2 ♗e8

White has no pawn breaks and must still reckon with ....b7-b5 at some point.

28 ♔b1 ♗f6

Caruana needs to reorganise. Getting the bishop to d4 and the knight to c3 or e3 would be a start, but he is in such a tangle, it's impractical.

29 ♖e1 a4

Instead, 29...♗a4! 30 ♖cc1 (30 b3 ♗xb3 31 axb3 ♘xb3 32 ♕d1 a4 wins in slow motion as White has no moves, and if 33 ♖b2 b5! 34 cxb5 ♗xb2) 30...b5!? 31 cxb5 ♕b6 gives Black a nice attack. There is no time for 32 ♗d4 (or 32 ♗xh5 ♕xb5 33 ♗e2 ♕b7 and ...♖c8-b8) 32...♗xb5 33 ♗xf6 gxf6 34 ♗xh5 and something lands on d3 which, combined with an advance of the a-pawn, puts White in difficulties: for example, 34...♗d3+ 35 ♔a1 a4 36 ♗d1 a3 37 b3 ♘xb3+ 38 axb3 ♕d4+ 39 ♔a2 ♖xc1 wins.

30 ♕b4

After the game Magnus said he had missed the strength of this move and re-

evaluated his objectives here, deciding to go for the tie-breaks.

30...g6

There was also 30...a3!? and 30...♖a8.

31 ♖d1 ♖a8 ½-½

Black could play on without risk as White has no real pawn break and ♘f2-h3-g5 is easily dealt with, but Magnus had made up his mind.

Ex-world champions were scathing of Magnus's decision, but he knew he was superior at Rapid Chess where he is clearly world number one and Caruana number eight. What didn't immediately occur to me was that many Rapid games morph into Blitz games at the death, and Magnus is way better than Fabiano at Blitz. As you'll see inside, it was when the players only had around four minutes each in the first Rapid game that Caruana erred and missed a couple of not too difficult drawing lines.

Magnus was brutal in the second tie-break game.

F.Caruana-M.Carlsen
World Championship (2nd Rapid Tie-break Game), London 2018
Sicilian Pelikan

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e5 6 ♘db5 d6 7 ♘d5 ♘xd5 8 exd5 ♘e7 9 c4 ♘g6

9...a6 10 ♕a4 ♗d7?? 11 ♘xd6# is the oldest trick in the Pelikan.

10 ♕a4 ♗d7 11 ♕b4 ♕b8

Played instantly. Carlsen had obviously prepared for this, rather than the 11...♗f5 12 h4 h5 of game 12.

12 h4 h5 13 ♗e3 a6 14 ♘c3 a5

Gaining time to inhibit White's pawn majority on the queenside and drive the queen from an active square.

15 ♕b3 a4 16 ♕d1 ♗e7 17 g3 ♕c8!

It's not natural to exchange the light-squared bishops, but needs must, as if 17...f5 18 ♗e2 or 17...0-0 18 ♕xh5.

18 ♗e2 ♗g4 19 ♖c1 ♗xe2 20 ♕xe2

White is slightly better: his minor pieces have more scope, h5 is weaker than h4, and White's standard plan of c4-c5 is hard to stop.

20...♕f5!?

Defending the h5-pawn and preparing ...0-0.

21 c5

This has to be critical and was also superficially attractive, but Carlsen refutes it. White retains an edge after 21 ♘b5, and if 21...0-0 22 0-0 ♗xh4? 23 ♘xd6! or 21...♗xh4 22 gxh4 ♘xh4 23 f3 which wins. Even 21...0-0 22 ♘b5 ♖fc8 feels better for White, since Black is a long way from playing ...f7-f5 and rather wishes his pawn was on h7. All the sacrificial attempts fail unless White is careless.

21...0-0!

21...dxc5 22 ♗xc5! ♗xc5 23 ♕b5+ ♕d7 24 ♕xc5 favours White still.

22 c6 bxc6 23 dxc6 ♖fc8 24 ♕c4

And not 24 ♘d5? ♕e4 25 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 26 0-0 ♘xc6.

24...♗d8 25 ♘d5

After 25 0-0 ♘e7! 26 ♘xa4 d5 Black takes control.

25...e4!

The decisive moment.

26 c6?

A blunder, as Fabi miscalculates.

26 ♗d4 was necessary, and if 26...♘e5 27 ♗xe5 ♕xe5 28 0-0 ♖a5! 29 ♖fd1 ♖c5, although even here White has to play accurately to maintain equality, if indeed he can: for example, 30 ♕a6 ♖8xc6 31 ♕xc6 ♖xc6 32 ♖xc6 ♔h7! is a nice echo of the game,.

26...♗xc7!! 27 ♘xc7 ♘e5

28 ♘d5?

28 ♕d5 ♖ab8!! is a tremendous shot and an easy one to miss. White has no good move, and if 29 0-0 ♖xc7! 30 ♖xc7 ♘f3+ 31 ♔g2 ♕xd5.

28...♔h7 0-1

Black wins after 29 ♕b5 (or 29 ♕e2 ♘d3+ 30 ♔f1 ♘xc1) 29...♖xc1+ 30 ♗xc1 ♘d3+ 31 ♔e2 ♕f3+ 32 ♔d2 ♕xf2+ 33 ♔c3 ♖c8+, but not 28...♖xc4?? 29 ♘e7+ ♔h7 30 ♘xf5.

After being largely ignored, the third title contest in London in the last 25 years finally generated a huge amount of positive publicity for chess as the media became fascinated by first the deadlock and then the impending Armageddon game. I had great fun on Sky News and TalkSport, while the BBC and particularly *The Guardian* went to town.

The chess world must now decide whether the 12 draws represent an existential threat to Classical chess and a change in format is needed. In my view one match like this is insufficient data. Speaking on Chess24, Magnus said he thought Rapid and Blitz should play a greater role as the "best player in the world" should be good in all formats of

When Garry Kasparov got stuck in traffic, CSC pupil Imogen stepped up to make the first move for Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in his first semi-final game against Levon Aronian. Full coverage from the LCC and British Knockout Championship will feature in our February issue.

the game.

Garry Kasparov said at the London Chess Classic that he favours playing the Rapid play-off before game one. That's a step too far for me and I'm not sure it would lead to the barrage of risk taking he predicts.

FIDE Fallout

As Tim Wall's article last month referenced, my FIDE election bid came up against not only the Russian state, but also Garry Kasparov, whose interests it appeared were better served by a Kremlin-controlled FIDE President. Graham Jurgensen, the CEO of Kasparov Chess Foundation Africa, was in Batumi throughout, campaigning – and ultimately my ticket was annihilated in Africa. This was also due to Makro's neglect of the continent and his failure to make the right allies there.

Confused? Well, it's all connected with Garry's desire to get the FIDE World Championship to St. Louis. For the last two years, I've been saying the Grand Chess Tour should be integrated with the world championship qualifying cycle, and now Garry is also working towards that end.

The FIDE Grand Prix tournaments, designed to produce two of the eight players in the Candidates, have been poor in my opinion, and the GCT – while being a very nice set of tournaments – has also drifted in the last couple of years to the extent that I am not totally certain (as I write these words) that the London Chess Classic's best interests are served by remaining in it. But we will see, as it's certainly very nice for London to be the final event in the Tour.

So while I'd welcome unity, I was also pleased when the new FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich announced he was going to align the Women's World Championship cycle with the Open. It's ridiculous that Ju Wenjun had to defend the title she won in May 2018 over Tan Zhongyi in a 64-player knockout event at Khanty-Mansiysk.

Ju must be heartily congratulated for making it through to the final and then overcoming a spirited challenge from Kateryna Lagno, who was close to winning their match after sublime play brought her victory in the second game of four. Lagno won a rook and opposite-coloured bishop ending with equal pawns which we will analyse next month. Ju Wenjun managed to 'win on demand' in game four and after two draws in a Rapid tie-break, the time limit was speeded up further to 10 minutes plus 10 seconds.

The first 10+10 game was roughly equal for some time before Lagno lost a pawn, but had good drawing chances due to a strong pair of bishops. Here is the position after 35...a4.

The new FIDE President, Arkady Dvorkovich, has announced that he plans to align the Women's World Championship cycle with the open version.

K.Lagno-Ju Wenjun
Women's World Championship,
Khanty-Mansiysk (rapid) 2018

The game concluded:

36 ♗a5?

36 ♗d6! and if 36...♘xa2 37 ♗xb5 when Black cannot play ...a4-a3. If, instead, 36...♗e5 37 ♗c5 and White intends a3 and ♗b4, exchanging to an opposite-coloured bishop endgame. Then if 37...♗xg3 White can continue 38 ♗d4+ ♗e5 39 ♗xc3 ♗xc3 40 ♗xb5.

36...♘xa2 37 ♗xb5 a3

The pawn costs White a piece.

38 ♔e4 ♗b2 39 ♗c4 ♘c1 40 ♗d2 a2 41 ♗xa2 ♘xa2 42 ♔d3 ♗c1 43 ♗a5 ♗a3 44 ♔c2 ♗b4 45 ♗d8+ ♗e7 46 ♗a5 ♘b4+ 47 ♔d2 ♗d6 48 g4 ♘c6 49 ♗b6 ♔e5 0-1

Ju Wenjun then played solidly with White in the return to win the match.

Jun Wenjun of China won the Women's world championship in May this year and, ridiculously, was forced to defend it in November!

60 Seconds with...
IM Harriet Hunt

Born: 4th February 1978, Oxford.

Place of residence: Hertfordshire.

Occupation: University researcher in archaeogenetics**.**

Enjoyable? Pretty good. Demands a totally different set of both intellectual and people skills than playing chess, which is probably a good balance to have in life.

And home life? Crazy. My husband and I have a four-year-old son and two-year-old daughter, and the merry-go-round of commuting (and doing everything else) around their needs. Enough said.

But sometimes good to escape to: Well, I'm trying to play a bit more chess again now. It's definitely an escape from the real world. There's a quote of Jon Speelman's from a long time ago (1988), which is something like: "It [chess] is not very well embedded in the real world, and sometimes it would be nice to be embedded a bit more within it" – I didn't really get this at the time, but it rings true now!

Sports played or followed: Tennis (followed, definitely). In the football league, Norwich City, courtesy of my husband who grew up there.

A favourite novel? *Middlemarch* by George Eliot. It's a bit like chess – it has everything.

Piece of music? Since it's the festive season I'll give my favourite Christmas carol, *Tomorrow Shall be my Dancing Day*.

Film or TV series? *University Challenge*.

What's the best thing about playing chess? I can think of several possible answers to this question, but taking a slight step back from the game itself, I'm going to go with the international perspective it gave me from a relatively young age, experiencing European history of the last quarter century or so through the lens of chess.

And the worst? Your entire self-esteem depends (usually) on how you played in your last game, so you can destroy yourself with one or two rash decisions. And that's the way it has to be, because if you don't feel like that about it, there's no point playing at all.

Your best move? I still rate my win over Peter Sowray as one of my best games, played when I was 16. I was rated quite a bit lower than Peter at the time, but managed to punish his errors in the opening with some accurate calculation.

P.Sowray-H.Hunt
Lloyds Bank Masters, London 1994
Colle System

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 e3 c5 4 ♗d3 ♘c6 5 0-0 ♗g4 6 c3 e6 7 ♘bd2 ♗d6 8 dxc5 ♗xc5 9 ♕c2 0-0 10 e4 h6

White has played a pretty insipid opening, conceding the centre, and has problems completing his development. As is often the case in such situations he now made matters worse by lashing out.

11 b4?! ♗b6? 12 b5

12...dxe4!

The exclamation mark is not so much for the move as the extent to which I managed to calculate all the key variations. I couldn't believe my luck when I realised I was clearly better or winning in every single one.

13 ♘xe4

13 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 14 bxc6? (or 14 ♕xe4 ♗f5 15 ♕a4 ♘e7) 14...♘xd2 15 ♘xd2 ♗f5 wins.

13...♗xf3 14 bxc6 ♘xe4!

Bravely trusting that my calculations were correct...

15 cxb7 ♘xf2! 16 ♗h7+

16 bxa8♕ ♘xd3+ 17 ♔h1 ♗xa8 wins, while 16 bxa8♘ ♘xd3+ 17 ♘xb6 ♕xb6+ 18 ♔h1 ♗e4 supplies superb compensation.

16...♔h8 17 gxf3

17 bxa8♘ ♗xa8 18 ♖xf2 ♕d5 19 ♗e4 ♕xe4 20 ♕xe4 ♗xe4 leaves Black clearly better.

17...♖b8

Finally saving the rook and Black is now completely winning. White's beleaguered bishop on h7 is going to drop off.

18 ♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 19 ♔xf2 ♕h4+ 20 ♔g2 f5 21 ♗a3 ♖fd8 22 ♔h1 ♔xh7 23 ♖b1 ♕f4 24 ♕e2 ♖d7 25 ♖b4 ♕g5 26 f4 ♕g4 27 ♕xg4 fxg4 28 ♖e4 ♖bxb7 29 ♖xe6 ♖d2 30 ♗b4 a5 31 ♖d6 ♖xa2 32 ♖a6 ♖d7 33 ♗d6 ♖d2 34 ♗c5 ♖b7 0-1

But less memorable than your worst move? At a girls' schools tournament I played in as a teenager, where I managed to exit the tournament hall through a plate glass door. I still have an array of scars on my knees as a result.

And a highly memorable opponent? Got to be my brother Adam.

Favourite game of all time? Ivanchuk-Yusupov, 9th game, Brussels Candidates 1991.

The best three chess books: No idea about 'best', but three that made a big impression on me: *John Nunn's Best Games* (probably my favourite of his various writings), John Watson's *Secrets of Chess Strategy*, and *Rate Your Endgame* by the late Edmar Mednis and Colin Crouch.

Is FIDE doing a good job? I'm very out of touch with chess politics, but one can only be optimistic for change under Dvorkovich.

Any advice for them or the ECF? I do think they should think very carefully about the division of international chess into 'Open' and 'Women's' events – this is a historical set-up. While there are still some good reasons for maintaining this split (I'm broadly in favour, with some reservations), in this day and age, it needs better justifying, and I've not seen any intelligent commentary on the issue.

Can chess make one happy? It fills one with happiness and self-disgust in pretty equal measures.

A tip please for the club player: Calculate! Or at least try. Steering away from a position with a vague 'I didn't like the look of that' doesn't get you anywhere.

Late Drama

It was no great surprise to see a number of endgames in the world championship match. Jonathan Speelman takes a look at some of the more dramatic and instructive ones

The world championship match produced a number of fascinating endgames though the standard of defence was so high that, of course, the first decisive one was as late as the first play-off game, the thirteenth. Here I'm going to look at that breakthrough moment for Magnus Carlsen and first, three other games, two of which he was defending in and the third (mildly) attacking.

We begin with the wonderful fortress the world champion created to defend himself in Game 6.

M.Carlsen-F.Caruana
Game 6

After an already fierce battle, Caruana had outplayed Carlsen who was now on the ropes. He decided to sacrifice a piece, but later admitted that for the second time this game, he had missed ...♗a3 blocking the a-pawn, which made it two pawns for the piece rather than three.

44 ♗xd5!?

If 44 ♘f1 ♘xf3 45 ♔xf3 d4+ 46 ♔e2 ♗b5+ 47 ♔e1 ♗d3 is very unpleasant though the engines claim, at least at first, that it's defensible.

44...♗xe3 45 ♗xc6 ♗xf4 46 ♗xb7 ♗d6 47 ♗xa6 ♘e4 48 g4

48 ♔f3 ♘xg3 49 ♗d3 ♘h5 50 a4 was also very complicated and would require a whole other skein of analysis.

48...♗a3!

Winning a queenside pawn.

49 ♗c4 ♔f8 50 g5 ♘c3 51 b4!

It is important to retain a passed pawn as far as possible from the kingside.

51...♗xb4 52 ♔f3 ♘a4 53 ♗b5 ♘c5 54 a4

White has just two pawns for the piece, but a clear advantage on the kingside which gives him chances of either exchanging or attacking when Black advances his king. It's also worth noting that if later Black is induced to capture the h-pawn with his own pawn then he will have the wrong rook's pawn.

54...f6 55 ♔g4!

The white king has to stay on the kingside, protecting his pawns and eyeing Black's.

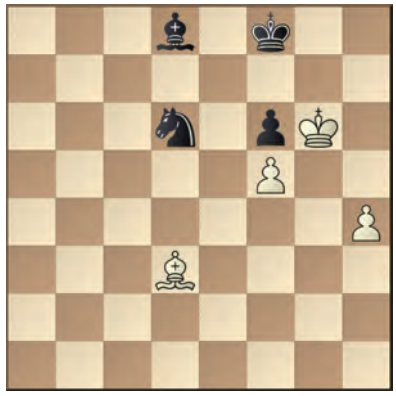
55...♘e4 56 ♔h5

Watching at the time, I imagined that if the black knight were on e5 then he would win, by playing ...♗e1, king round to h3 and ...♗xh4. However, of course when Black plays ...♔h3, White replies ♗f1+, so I'm not sure about that either.

56...♗e1 57 ♗d3 ♘d6

Carlsen now found a lovely way to create a fortress, though it was one requiring high maintenance and at one moment he fell into arrears.

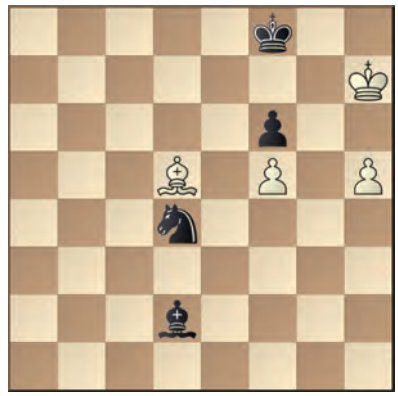
58 a5! ♗xa5 59 gxf6 gxf6 60 ♔g6 ♗d8



61 ♔h7!

Preventing ....♔f8-g8-h8 after which Black can force the h-pawn to advance and then eventually capture it. For example, 61 ♗c2 ♔g8 62 ♗d3 ♔h8 63 ♗c2 ♗b6 64 ♗d3 ♗f2 65 h5 ♗h4 66 ♔h6 (or 66 ♗c2 ♗g5 67 ♗d3 ♔g8 68 ♗b1 ♘b5 69 ♗c2 ♘d4 70 ♗d1 ♘c6 71 ♗b3+ ♔h8 72 h6 ♘e5+ 73 ♔h5 ♗e3 74 ♗d5 ♔h7 and the h-pawn falls) 66...♘f7+ 67 ♔g6 ♘e5+ 68 ♔h6 ♗g5#.

61...♘f7 62 ♗c4 ♘e5 63 ♗d5 ♗a5 64 h5 ♗d2 65 ♗a2 ♘f3 66 ♗d5 ♘d4



67 ♔g6?!

In this extremely difficult position, Carlsen committed an almost imperceptible inaccuracy which 'should' have led to his defeat. Both players believed in the fortress by now, however, and unsurprisingly Caruana failed to realise that the moment was critical.

67 ♗c4 was correct and if 67...♗c3 68 ♗d3. Black wants to get his knight to g3 to force h6 and this will win if the bishop is on g5. However, with the bishop defending the pawn on the long diagonal, it's impossible to transfer it to g5 since after ...♗d2, say, ♔g6 will threaten both ♔xf6 and h7.

Another important position after 67 ♗c4 is that which arises following 67...♗g5 68 ♔g6. This is zugzwang. If it were White to move then he would have to allow either ...♘e2 or ...♔g8, and both would be fatal.

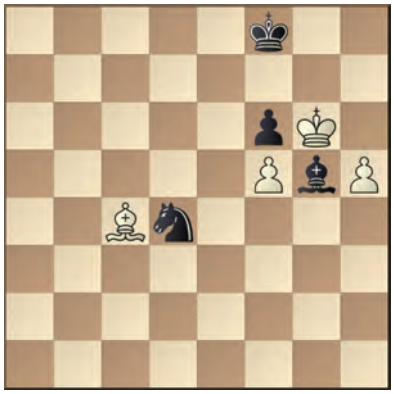
Too lazy to set-up the chessboard?

Download our free electronic database (available in both PGN & CBH formats) with all the chess and annotations from this, and every article - only at:

www.chess.co.uk

However, here it's Black to move and 68...♘f3 69 ♔h7 ♘h4 70 ♗e6 ♗d2 71 ♗a2 ♗e3 72 ♗e6 ♗g5 73 ♗d7 is still OK.

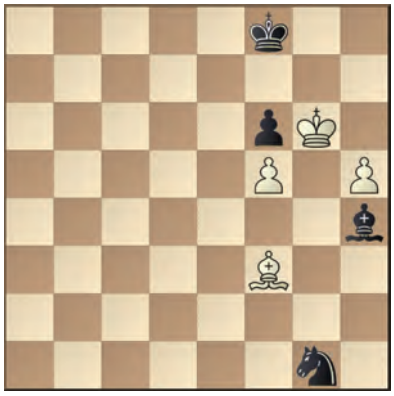
67...♗g5 68 ♗c4



He has to stay on the diagonal to prevent ...♔g8 and if 68 h6 ♘e2 (preventing h7 due to mate in one!) 69 ♔h7 ♘f4 when the knight can eventually get back to f7: 70 ♗e4 ♘h3 71 ♗h1 (or 71 ♔g6 ♔g8) 71...♘f2 72 ♗f3 ♘d3 73 ♗e2 ♘e5 74 ♗h5 ♘f7 and wins. Likewise, 68 ♗e4 ♔g8 is decisive.

68...♘f3?!

68...♗h4! 69 ♗d5 ♘e2 70 ♗f3 ♘g1!! was the beautiful winning line.



Despite the knight being dominated by the bishop, Black is able to win through a series of zugzwangs, though as Garry Kasparov tweeted, had Caruana found it then "They would request metal detectors immediately! No human can willingly trap his own knight like that."

Black wins after both: (a) 71 ♗g4 ♔g8! 72 ♔h6 ♔h8 73 ♔g6 ♗g5 74 h6 ♗h4 75 ♔h5 ♗e1 76 ♔g6 ♗c3 77 ♔h5 ♗d2 78 ♔g6 ♗g5 79 h7 ♗h4 80 ♔h6 ♗e1 81 ♔g6 ♗c3 82 ♔h6 ♗d2+ 83 ♔g6 ♗g5; and (b) 71 ♗d5 ♗g5 72 ♔h7 ♘e2 73 ♗f3 ♘g3 74 ♗g4 (the bishop has 'lost' the important a2-g8 diagonal) 74...♔f7 75 ♔h8 ♗e3 76 ♔h7 ♗c5 77 ♔h8 (or 77 ♗d1 ♘xf5 78 ♗b3+ ♔e7 79 ♔g6 ♘h4+ 80 ♔g7 ♗d4 and Black gains control) 77...♗f8 78 ♔h7 ♘e4 and mate follows.

69 ♔h7

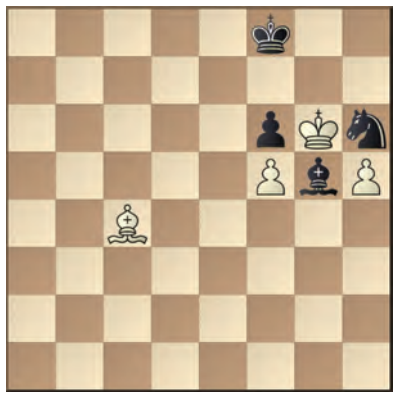
Re-establishing the fortress.

69...♘e5 70 ♗b3 ♘g4 71 ♗c4 ♘e3 72 ♗d3!

But not 72 ♗e6? ♗h4 73 ♗d7 ♘f1 74 ♗a4 ♘g3 75 ♔g6 ♔g8 and wins.

72...♘g4 73 ♗c4 ♘h6 74 ♔g6

Magnus looks slighty disbelieving as Danel King and Fabiano find the win for Black in Game 6.



Since he couldn't find a way to make progress (there isn't one), Caruana now decided to advance his king.

74...♔e7 75 ♗b3 ♔d6 76 ♗c2 ♔e5 77 ♗d3 ♔f4 78 ♗c2 ♘g4 79 ♗b3 ♘e3 80 h6 ♗xh6 ½-½

Here they agreed the draw. White holds easily after either 81 ♔xf6 or 81 ♔xh6 ♘xf5+ 82 ♔g6 ♔e5 83 ♗c2. A brilliant save by Carlsen who found it incredibly hard to access his strength when pressing, but was magnificent with his back to the wall.

There were several instances of opposite-coloured bishops in the match, including the pure opposite bishop ending in Game 11.

M.Carlsen-F.Caruana
Game 11

25 ♗f4 ♖xd2 26 ♔xd2

White is better here because his king is more active and Black's queenside is compromised, but of course with decent defence it's a draw. Caruana realised – or rather presumably knew – that the bishop can defend the whole kingside against the white king and therefore jettisoned his c-pawn to get his king over to defend the queenside.

I wondered vaguely whether Carlsen could have put his bishop on d6 to prevent the black king approaching without weakening the kingside with ...f5, but I'm sure it's only a whimsy. The other question was whether Carlsen could somehow have kept the light-square diagonals towards the corner blocked to hinder the black bishop's defence, but that also seems quite impossible.

26...a6 27 a3

If 27 ♗d6? ♗xa2 28 b3 c4 29 ♔c3 cxb3 30 cxb3 is simply a draw. With the bishop now not controlling c1, 30 ♔b2 is impossible.

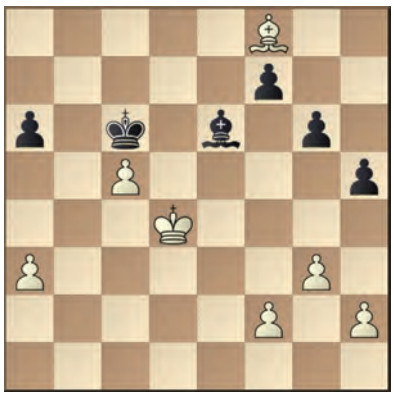
27 b3 ♗d5 28 f3 is hardly serious either: for example, 28...b5 29 ♗d6 c4 30 ♔c3 cxb3 31 axb3 (or 31 cxb3 a5) 31...a5 32 ♔d4 ♗e6 33 ♔c5 a4 34 bxa4 bxa4 35 ♔b5 ♗d7+ 36 ♔b6 ♗e6 37 ♔b5 ♗d7+ 38 ♔b4 f5 39 c4 ♔f7 40 c5 ♔e6, with a comfortable draw.

27...♔f8 28 ♗c7 b5 29 ♗d6+ ♔e8 30 ♗xc5 h5 31 ♔e3 ♔d7 32 ♔d4

There's also little left to be tried after 32 ♔f4 g6 33 ♔e5 ♔c6 34 ♗e3 ♗d5 35 f3 ♗c4 36 ♔f6 ♗f1 37 g3 (or 37 g4 ♗e2 38 gxh5 gxh5 39 f4 ♗c4 40 b3 ♗d5) 37...♗c4 38 f4 ♗d5 39 b3 ♗e6 40 h4 ♗d5.

32...g6 33 g3 ♗e2 34 ♗f8 ♔c6 35 b3 ♗d1 36 ♔d3 ♗g4 37 c4 ♗e6 38 ♔d4 bxc4 39 bxc4 ♗g4 40 c5 ♗e6

Two well-dressed players, but come the tie-break, Carlsen removed his jacket and won well.



Now that the bishop can defend from b3, c2 and d1, it's pretty trivial.

41 ♗h6 ♗d5 42 ♗e3 ♗e6 43 ♔e5 ♗d5 44 ♔f4

If 44 ♔f6 Black can simply allow f4-f5 if he likes and then play the bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal, i.e. 44...♗b3 45 f4 ♗c4 46 f5 ♗d3!.

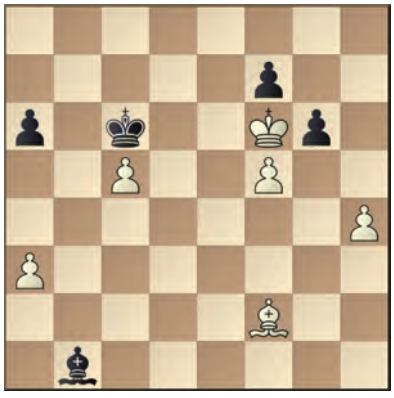
44...♗e6 45 ♔g5

After 45 f3 ♗b3 46 g4 the simplest defence is 46...♗d1. White can isolate the pawns if he likes, but 47 gxh5 gxh5 48 h4 ♗e2 (or even 48...f5) 49 ♔e4 ♗d1 50 f4 ♗c2+ 51 ♔e5 ♗d1 52 ♔f6 ♗b3 53 ♔g5 ♗d1 leads absolutely nowhere.

45...♗d5 46 g4 hxg4 47 ♔xg4 ♗e6+ 48 ♔g5 ♗b3

48...♗d5 49 ♔f6 ♗c4 50 f4 ♗b3 51 h4 ♗a2 52 f5 ♗b1 53 ♗f2 ♗c2 was also sufficient.

49 ♔f6 ♗a2 50 h4 ♗b3 51 f4 ♗a2 52 ♔e7 ♗b3 53 ♔f6 ♗a2 54 f5 ♗b1 55 ♗f2

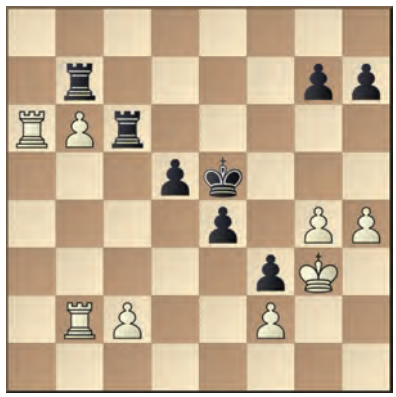


55...♗c2 ½-½

If 55...♗xf5?? 56 h5 and White wins, but of course Caruana simply waited.

In Game 10, Carlsen seemed to be pressing in the double-rook ending, but it was an illusion and he came close to defeat.

F.Caruana-M.Carlsen
Game 10



Black is doing well optically due to the powerfully centralised king, but in fact the b-pawn is a serious irritant and it was Carlsen who had to be careful.

43...h6

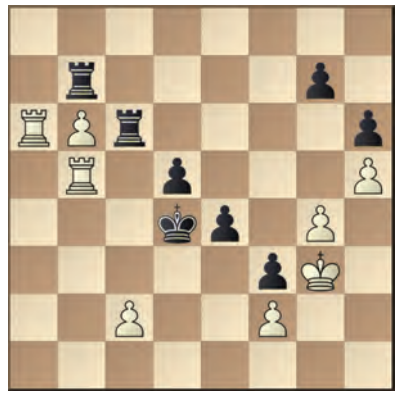
Possibly preferable was 43...g6 44 g5 ♔d6 45 ♖a7 ♖bxb6 46 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 47 ♖xh7 ♖b2 48 ♖g7 ♖xc2 49 ♖xg6+ ♔e5 50 ♖g8 ♖c1 51 ♖e8+ ♔f5 52 ♖f8+ ♔e5 when White should take the draw, since 53 h5 ♖g1+ 54 ♔h4 d4 is already much better, if not simply winning for Black.

44 h5 ♔d4?

I presume this was a winning attempt, but it nearly loses. Carlsen said after the game that had he seen it, he would have played 44...♖b8 when White would likely try 45 ♖b5 ♔e6 46 c3 ♖b7 47 ♖aa5.

Instead, 44...g5 45 hxg6 ♖xg6 46 ♖b5 h5 47 ♖aa5 ♖xg4+ 48 ♔h3 ♔e6 49 ♖xd5 ♖xb6 50 ♖xh5 ♖g6 should end in a draw. One nice line runs 51 ♖h4 (not a move you'd play in practice, but it does work) 51...♖b1 52 ♖xe4+ (not 52 ♖a6+ ♔f5 53 ♖h5+ ♔f4 54 ♖h4+ ♔f5 55 ♖xg6 ♖h1+ 56 ♔g3 ♖g1+ 57 ♔h3 ♖xg6) 52...♔d7 (if 52...♔f7 53 ♖a7+ ♔f8 54 ♖a8+) 53 ♖a7+ ♔d8 54 ♖a8+ ♔d7 55 ♖a7+ and Black can either accede to perpetual check or draw with 55...♔d8 56 ♖a8+ ♔c7 57 ♖e7+ ♔d6 58 ♖a6+ ♔xe7 59 ♖xg6 ♖f1.

45 ♖b5



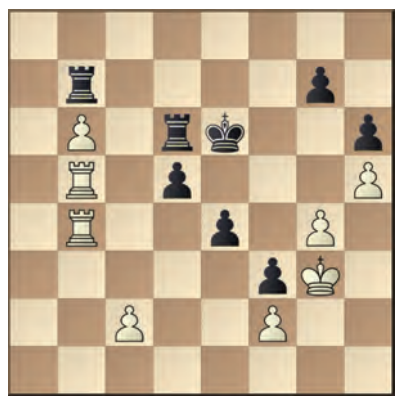
45...♖d6

The only move.

45...♔c4 46 ♖aa5 ♖d6 is presumably what Carlsen had initially intended, but after 47 ♖c5+ ♔d4 48 c3+! it all falls apart: for example, 48...♔e5 49 c4 ♖bxb6 50 ♖xd5+ ♖xd5 51 ♖xd5+ ♔e6 52 ♖d4 ♔e5 53 ♖d5+ ♔e6 54 c5 with excellent winning chances.

Instead, here both 46...d4 47 ♖e5 ♖bxb6 48 ♖xe4 ♖b2 49 ♖a4+ and 46...♖bxb6 47 ♖xd5 ♖b1 48 ♖e5 ♖g1+ 49 ♔f4 ♖f6+ 50 ♖f5 ♖xf5+ 51 ♖xf5 ♖g2 52 ♔xe4 ♖xg4+ 53 ♔e5 ♖g2 54 ♖xf3 are extremely unpleasant. Indeed, probably this latter line simply loses for Black, as shown by 54...♖h2 (or 54...♖g5+ 55 ♖f5 ♖g1 56 ♔e6 ♔c3 57 ♔f7 ♔xc2 58 ♖d5) 55 ♖f5 ♔c3 56 ♔e6 ♔xc2 57 ♔f7 ♖g2 58 ♖d5 ♔c3 59 f4 ♖g4 60 ♖d6 ♔c4 61 ♖g6 ♖xf4+ 62 ♔xg7.

46 ♖a4+ ♔e5 47 ♖ab4 ♔e6



48 c4

48 c3 was a better chance, though hard to play. If 48...♖c6 49 ♖d4 ♖bxb6 50 ♖bxd5 ♖xc3 51 ♖f5 e3 52 ♖e4+ ♔d6 53 ♖xe3 (maybe 53 fxe3) 53...♖xe3 54 fxe3 ♔e6 55 ♔xf3, which is much more dangerous for Black than with the pawn on the f-file.

48...dxc4 49 ♖xc4 ♖dxb6 50 ♖xe4+ ♔f7 51 ♖f5+

51 ♖f4+ ♔g8 52 ♖c5 ♖f6 (52...♖b8 is

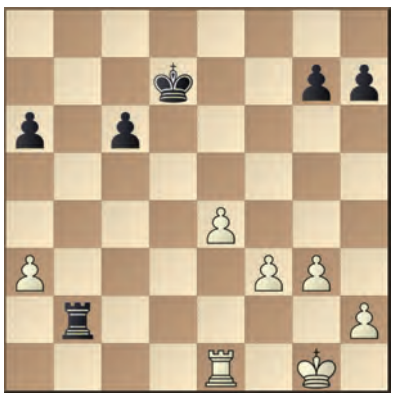
also possible) 53 ♖xf6 gxf6 54 ♔xf3 ♔f7 should certainly be a draw, but it's surprising that Caruana didn't try at least a bit.

51...♖f6 52 ♖xf6+ ♔xf6 53 ♔xf3 ♔f7 54 ♔g3 ½-½

And here he rather generously offered a draw.

And so to the decisive first play-off game:

M.Carlsen-F.Caruana
1st play-off game (rapid)



Carlsen had gained the advantage, but Caruana fought back to reach this rook endgame where he's a pawn down, but White's king is terribly placed on g1. We could argue about the absolute optimal way to proceed, but Caruana's defence was perfectly adequate until he blundered on move 37.

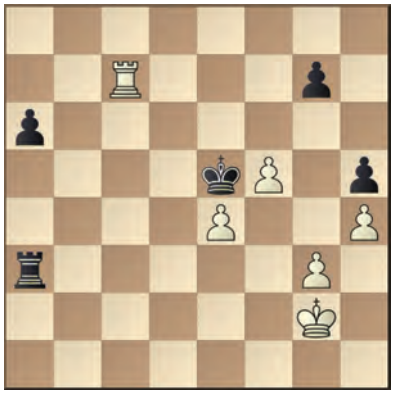
28 ♖d1+ ♔e6 29 f4 c5 30 ♖d5 ♖c2

Instead, 30...c4 31 f5+ (or 31 ♖c5 ♖c2 when 32 f5+ ♔d6 33 ♖c8 ♔d7 is an immediate draw, while after 32 e5 ♔f5 Black's king is much too active) 31...♔f6 32 ♖c5 ♖c2 (or 32...h5 33 ♖xc4 ♔e5 34 ♖a4 when Black should avoid 34...♖e2 35 ♖xa6 and prefer 34...h4! 35 gxh4 ♔f4 36 ♔f1 ♔f3 37 ♔e1 ♔e3 38 ♔d1 ♔d3 39 ♔c1 ♖xh2 40 e5 ♔c3 41 ♔d1 ♔d3 42 ♔e1 ♔e3 43 ♔f1 ♖f2+ 44 ♔g1 ♖xf5) 33 h4 transposes to the game.

31 h4 c4 32 f5+ ♔f6

32...♔e7 33 e5 would definitely have made things worse.

33 ♖c5 h5 34 ♔f1 ♖c3 35 ♔g2 ♖xa3 36 ♖xc4 ♔e5 37 ♖c7



The crucial position of the game, and arguably the whole match.

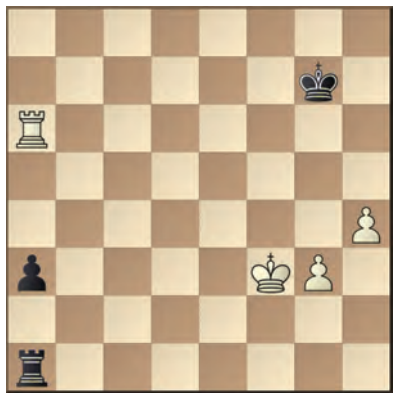
37...♔xe4??

Instead, 37...♖a2+ 38 ♔h3 ♔xe4 39 ♖xg7 ♖a1! (threatening 40...♔f3) 40 ♖b7 ♖f1! 41 ♖b6 ♖xf5 42 ♖xa6 ♔e5 43 ♔g2 ♔d5 draws pretty easily. 44 g4 is White's only try, but after 44...♖f4 45 gxh5 ♖xh4 46 h6 ♔e5 47 ♔g3 ♖h1 it's trivial.

38 ♖e7+! ♔xf5 39 ♖xg7 ♔f6 40 ♖g5 a5 41 ♖xh5

The tablebases confirm that this is winning, though it's still far from easy.

41...a4 42 ♖a5 ♖a1 43 ♔f3 a3 44 ♖a6+ ♔g7

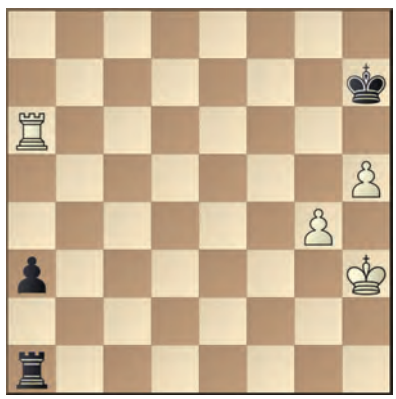


If the pawn were on g2 rather than g3 then this would be very simple, since White could advance the king and meet ...♖g1 with ♖xa2, defending the pawn. As it is, he has to be much more careful since if the king ends up in no man's land, with, say, ♔g4, g3 and h5, then there will be no way to advance without allowing Black's rook to move and capture a pawn (or worse give check and win).

45 ♔g2 ♖a2+ 46 ♔h3 ♖a1 47 h5 ♔h7

Likewise, if 47...a2 48 ♔h2 ♖b1 49 ♖xa2 ♔h6 (or 49...♖b5 50 g4 ♖b3 51 ♖a6) 50 ♖a5, when White should win.

48 g4

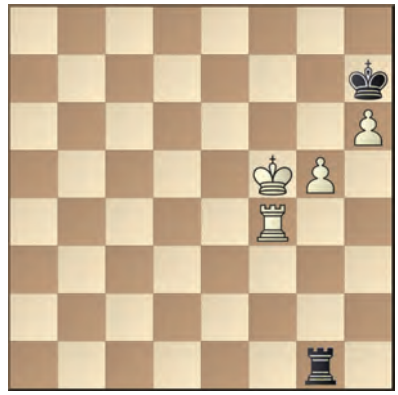


48...♔g7?

This makes it easy since Carlsen can get the king among the pawns one rank further up after which the king can advance with a mate threat so negating the defence ...♖g1.

48...a2 was the best defence, when 49 ♔h2! (White needs g2 for his rook) 49...♔g7 50 g5 ♖f1 51 ♖xa2 ♖f5 52 ♖g2 can lead to some long but instructive lines:

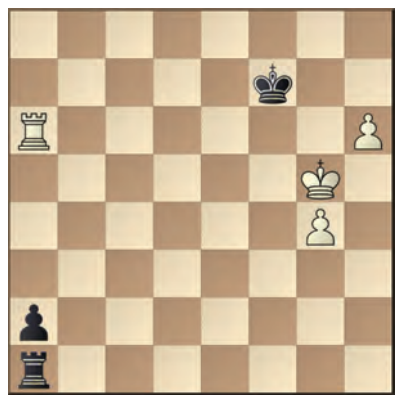
a) 52...♔h7 53 ♔h3 ♖a5 54 ♔h4 ♖a4+ 55 ♖g4 ♖a1 56 ♖e4 ♖h1+ 57 ♔g4 ♖g1+ 58 ♔f5 ♖f1+ 59 ♖f4 ♖a1 60 h6 ♖g1.



This still looks difficult and I actually asked a tablebase how best to proceed: 61 ♖a4 ♖f1+ 62 ♔g4 ♖g1+ 63 ♔h5 ♖h1+ 64 ♖h4 ♖g1 65 ♖h2! is zugzwang and after 65...♖g3 66 ♖a2 ♖h3+ 67 ♔g4 ♖b3 68 ♖a7+ ♔g8 69 g6, with the pawns both on the sixth rank, it's now quite simple. White can win either by arranging to play his king to b7 or a7 and forcing the exchange of rooks, or more directly by stabilising the king on g5 with the rook on f5: for example, 69...♖b4+ 70 ♔f5 ♖b5+ 71 ♔e4 ♖b4+ 72 ♔d5 ♖b5+ 73 ♔c6 ♖b8 74 ♖b7 (or 74 ♖e7 ♖a8 75 ♔d5 ♖a5+ 76 ♔e4 ♖a4+ 77 ♔f5 ♖a5+ 78 ♖e5 ♖a8 79 ♔g5 ♖b8 80 ♖f5 ♖a8 and here in his commentary on chess24, Alexander Grischuk pointed out 81 g7 – 81 h7+ ♔g7 82 ♖f7+ ♔h8 83 ♔h6 wins even more simply since there is no stalemate – 81...♖b8 82 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 83 ♔g6! and also here 81...♔h7 82 ♖f8 ♖xf8 83 gxf8♗ or 83 gxf8♘, but not a promotion to a major piece, of course) 74...♖c8+ 75 ♔b6 ♖e8 76 ♔a7 ♖d8 77 ♖b8.

b) 52...♖a5 53 ♔h3 ♖b5 54 ♔h4 ♖b4+ 55 ♖g4 ♖b1 (or 55...♖b2 56 ♖a4 ♖h2+ 57 ♔g4 ♖g2+ 58 ♔f4 ♖f2+ 59 ♔g3) 56 ♖e4 ♖h1+ 57 ♔g4 ♖g1+ 58 ♔f5 ♖f1+ 59 ♖f4 ♖a1 60 h6+ ♔h7 61 ♔g4 ♖g1+ 62 ♔h5 ♖h1+ 63 ♖h4 ♖g1 64 ♖h2! with the same zugzwang as above. Incidentally if Black had somehow arranged to have ♖h1 versus ♖g2 with White to move then 1 ♖h3 ♖g1 2 ♖h2 would come to the same thing.

49 ♔h4 a2 50 ♔g5 ♔f7 51 h6



51...♖b1

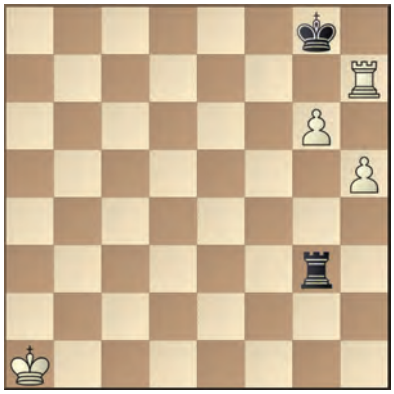
51...♔f8 52 ♖a7 ♔g8 53 ♔g6 is equally simple.

52 ♖a7+ ♔g8 53 ♖xa2 ♖b5+ 54 ♔g6 ♖b6+ 55 ♔h5 1-0

A study in focus and every time they got down to an endgame, Carlsen generally shone.

This endgame reminded me of a famous study by Genrikh Kasparian.

G.Kasparian, 1946



White to play and win

The main idea is that when White gets to the kingside to disturb the rook, he reaches a position with the king on f2 and black rook on h3. If it's his move then after ♔g2 ♖a3 the white rook can't escape, since if ♖b7 ♖a5. However, it turns out that the position with the king on f2 and black rook on h3 is zugzwang, and White can achieve this with Black to move by playing 1 ♔a2!!.

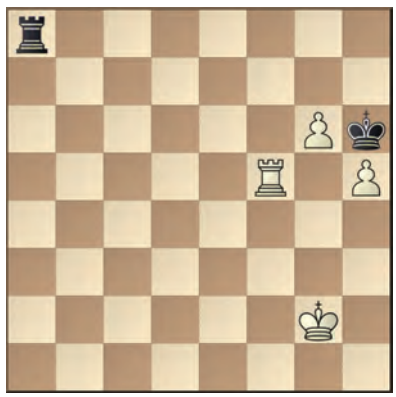
1 ♔a2!! ♖h3

1...♖c3 is actually much more complicated: 2 ♖b7 ♖h3 3 ♖b5 ♔g7. Here Kasparian gave 4 ♖g5! which, indeed, keeps control: 4...♖h4 (if 4...♔h6 5 g7 or 4...♖c3 5 h6+ ♔g8 6 ♖a5) 5 ♔b3 ♖h1 6 ♔c4 ♖c1+ (6...♖h4+ 7 ♔d3) 7 ♔d5 ♖d1+ (7...♖a1 8 ♖e5 ♔h6 9 ♖e8 also wins) 8 ♔c6 ♖c1+ 9 ♔d6 ♖d1+ 10 ♖d5 ♖a1 11 ♔e7 and as we'll see in a minute, White is winning.

2 ♔b2 ♖g3 3 ♔c2 ♖h3 4 ♔d2 ♖g3 5 ♔e2 ♖h3 6 ♔f2 ♖a3 7 ♖b7 ♖h3 8 ♖b5 ♔g7 9 ♔g2 ♖h4 10 ♔g3 ♖h1 11 ♖b7+ ♔g8 12 ♔g4

And the win becomes clear.

I wondered what happened if Black was able to set up the best defence with his king on h6 and rook preventing ♖f8.



It transpires that even if Black gets this, it's winning for White, if hard work:

1 ♔g3 ♖a3+ 2 ♔f4 ♖a4+ 3 ♔e5 ♖a5+ 4 ♔e6 ♖a6+ 5 ♔e7 ♖a7+ 6 ♔e8 ♖a8+ 7 ♔f7 ♖f8+

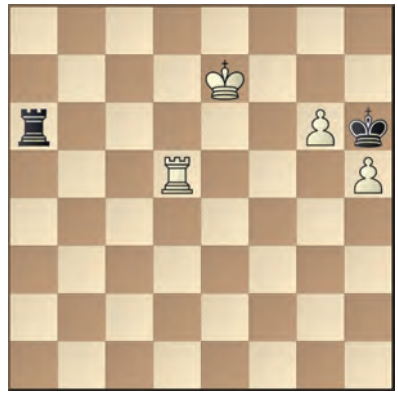
Alternatively, 7...♖a7+ 8 ♔g8 ♖g7+ 9 ♔f8 (and not 9 ♔h8? ♖g8+) 9...♖g8+ 10 ♔e7 ♖a8 11 ♖d5 ♔g7 12 ♖d7 (12 ♖d8? ♖a5) 12...♖a6 13 ♔d8+ (if 13 ♖b7 ♔g8) 13...♔f6 14 ♔e8 ♖a5 15 ♖f7+ ♔g5 16 ♖e7 ♔h6 (16...♔f6 17 g7 ♖a8+ 18 ♔d7 ♖a7+ 19 ♔c6 ♖a8 20 h6 ♔g6 21 ♖e6+ ♔h7 22 ♔b7 wins too) 17 g7 ♔h7 18 ♔f8 ♖a8+ 19 ♔f7 ♖b8 20 h6 ♖a8 21 ♖e8 and wins.

8 ♔e6 ♖e8+ 9 ♔d7 ♖a8

White's plan is now to stabilise the king on e7 for a move, after which he'll be able to improve the rook, since his king is close enough to the pawns to refute ...♔xh5.

9...♖b8 10 ♖d5 ♖a8 11 ♔e7 is easier.

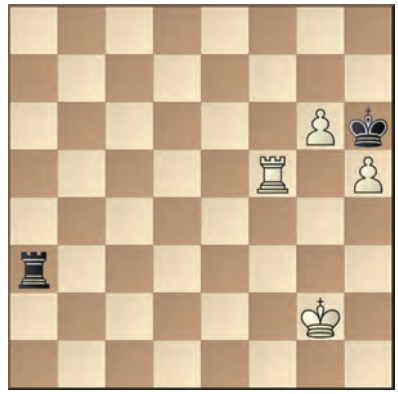
10 ♖d5 ♖a6 11 ♔e7



11...♔g7 12 ♖d7 ♖b6 13 ♔d8+ ♔g8 14 ♔c7 ♖a6 15 ♖d6

And White finally gets in h5-h6.

Another interesting position is:



1 ♔h2

White can also start with 1 ♖f8.

1...♖b3

It turns out that Black now lacks sufficient checking distance, i.e. 1 ♔h2 was at least a pseudo zugzwang.

Instead, 1...♖a2+ leads to the lines looked at above where White's king advances to f7 and he meets ...♖f8+ with ♔e6

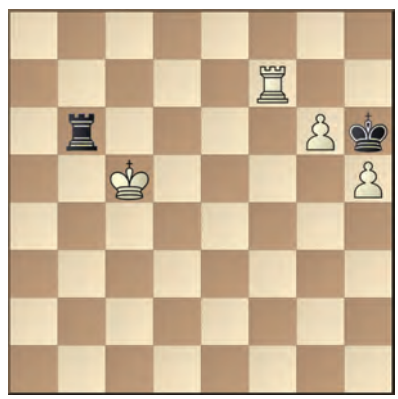
2 ♖f7! ♖b2+ 3 ♔g3 ♖b3+ 4 ♔f4 ♖b4+ 5 ♔f5 ♖b5+ 6 ♔f6 ♖b6+ 7 ♔e7 ♖b7+

Or if 7...♔xh5 8 g7 ♖b8 9 ♖f6 and wins.

8 ♔d6 ♖b6+

With the rook on a6, this would be drawn.

9 ♔c5



White will now get in ♖h7+ followed by g7, h6 and ♖h8. Overall, a fascinating and instructive endgame.

Caru Can't

Even Carlsen can struggle in complex positions, but in the match Caruana didn't complicate enough

It must have taken Magnus Carlsen a while to get his head around how he didn't win the opening game of the world championship – which we saw in last month's Editorial. As the match wore on, in the post-game press conferences Carlsen became increasingly disappointed with his play, whereas the initially timid Caruana matured before our eyes. By the end of the match, one could almost have been forgiven for thinking Caruana was the seasoned world champion and Carlsen the nervous challenger.

On the board, however, things were much less clear. Carlsen was undoubtedly well below his best, but still overall seemed somewhat the stronger player. He might have been so nervous about losing his title that he agreed a draw in the final game when enjoying a very pleasant advantage indeed, but come the play-off the champ was the confident Carlsen of old and ran out a ready winner.

And did Caruana follow Erik Kislik's advice in these pages? Good preparation did produce an advantageous, unbalanced position in the eighth game, where even the mighty Magnus appeared a little at sea... only for Fabiano to blink in the headlights and play it safe.

F.Caruana-M.Carlsen
Game 8
Sicilian Pelikan

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4

Undoubtedly a more challenging course than the Rossolimo of Games 2, 4 and 6.

3...cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e5 6 ♘db5 d6 7 ♘d5

A sensible positional policy, avoiding the complex main lines of the Sveshnikov which arise after 7 ♗g5 a6 8 ♘a3 b5 9 ♗xf6 gxf6 10 ♘d5 f5.

7...♘xd5 8 exd5 ♘b8

Black's main move, but Carlsen would later switch to 8...♘e7 9 c4 ♘g6 10 ♕a4 ♗d7 11 ♕b4. Then 11...♗f5 was his choice in Game 12 before 11...♕b8!? 12 h4 h5 occurred in the second play-off encounter.

9 a4!?

9 c4 is the main line here, but the text has been relatively popular of late. Even so, it appeared to slightly catch Carlsen out.

9...♗e7 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♘d7 12 ♗d2

Caruana likes such 'little' moves, but the idea of advancing a4-a5 is, of course, a good one. Presumably fearing an improvement, he switched to 12 b4?! in Game 10, but this is ugly, if machine-approved, in view of 12...a6 13 ♘a3 a5. White finds his queenside pawns broken up and after 14 bxa5 ♖xa5 15 ♘c4 ♖a8 16 ♗e3 f5 17 a5 f4 18 ♗b6 ♕e8 19 ♖a3 ♕g6 Black already enjoyed a dangerous attacking set-up and one which forced Caruana to defend well just to stay on the board.

12...f5 13 a5 a6 14 ♘a3

14...e4

A logical expansion. Another is 14...f4!?, which was actually *AlphaZero*'s choice (DeepMind kindly allowed Matthew Sadler to analyse the world championship games with their pride and joy), intending 15 ♗b4 ♖f6 16 ♖e1 ♖h6 17 ♘c4 ♗f8. Here absolutely anything might happen in a practical game and even *AlphaZero* didn't seem totally certain how great White's advantage was.

15 ♘c4 ♘e5 16 ♘b6 ♖b8 17 f4!

Caruana was still moving fairly quickly as he thematically disturbed the central bastion.

17...exf3 18 ♗xf3 g5?!

Probably too ambitious, if also critical. 18...♗f6 was preferred by *AlphaZero*.

19 c4 f4

Black might prefer to keep the pawns where they are, but by this point he was committed as 19...♗f6 20 ♗e2 would have been quite pleasant for White, followed by ♕c2, attacking f5.

20 ♗c3!

White's bishops begin to come into their own. 20 ♗e4 was also strong.

20...♗f5?!

The move initially suggested by most of the commercially-available engines, but *AlphaZero* preferred 20...♕c7, holding up c4-c5 and after 21 ♖c1 ♗f5 22 b4 ♗f6 23 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 24 ♗g4 White is pleasantly better, but Black is very much still fighting.

21 c5!

Caruana crashes through. Apparently by this point, *AlphaZero* had a whopping 84% expected score for White.

21...♘xf3+

Carlsen tries to retain a degree of control, rather than go all in with 21...g4 22 ♗e2 f3 23 gxf3 gxf3 24 ♗xf3. Black doesn't even have 24...♗g5 25 ♗g2 ♗e3+ 26 ♔h1 ♗xc5 due to 27 ♗xe5 dxe5 28 ♖xf5! ♖xf5 29 ♕c2 when he finds himself in deep trouble.

22 ♕xf3 dxc5 23 ♖ad1 ♗d6

Arguably the pivotal position of the match. The d-pawn is blockaded for now, but can Black really survive with such an extended kingside?

24 h3?

Preventing ...g4, but this was heavily criticised by many of the watching grandmasters. They wanted White to attack with 24 ♕h5 when 24...♗g6 (24...♕e8 might be necessary, but 25 ♕xg5+ ♕g6 26 ♕xg6+ hxg6 27 ♘c4 is still very promising for White) 25 ♕h3 ♗f5 26 ♕h6 ♖f7 27 ♖fe1 ♗f8 28 ♕h5 maintains a huge advantage according to *AlphaZero* and even the mere mortal engines. Black is badly short of a good move and after, say, 28...♗d6 (or 28...♗g7 29 d6) 29 ♘c4 ♖c8? 30 ♖e8+! ♕xe8 31 ♕xg5+ ♗g6 32 ♘xd6 finds himself completely cleaned up.

24...♕e8! 25 ♘c4 ♕g6

Carlsen has prevented ♕h5 and suddenly has everything under control.

26 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 27 h4 gxh4 28 ♕xf4 ♕xf4 29 ♖xf4

White is still fairly active and will regain his pawn, but in view of the opposite-coloured bishops, a draw was already looking rather likely.

29...h5 30 ♖e1 ♗g4 31 ♖f6 ♖xf6 32 ♗xf6 ♔f7 33 ♗xh4 ♖e8 34 ♖f1+

One final try, but with Black able to activate his rook via e2, White has absolutely nothing here.

34...♔g8 35 ♖f6 ♖e2 36 ♖g6+ ♔f8 37 d6 ♖d2 38 ♖g5 ½-½

CHESS

A Spectator Sport?

Ben Graff took a trip to the recent world championship match in London to see if a live chess experience can beat watching online

I take the train from Leamington Spa into London. Normally such a journey would be work. A day at the office. Meetings, emails, things soon forgotten. But today is different. I am going to game three of Carlsen-Caruana. I want to understand what live chess offers a fan in the internet age. To explore whether there are still reasons to attend in person, when the action can easily be followed at the click of a mouse. As the train heads south through Banbury and High Wycombe, my sense of anticipation grows. The city draws closer. I cannot pretend I will be a wholly impartial observer. I am willing this to be good.

I bought my ticket for £45 back in the summer. Not bad value compared to the cricket or the football. The College venue in Holborn is centrally located. Black and white banners outside ask, 'Who will be King?' Other billboards display headshots of the players, details of the opening times, chess murals.

The game starts at three o'clock and I join the queue outside at around one thirty. Press crews, mainly Norwegian, arrive with large cameras, tripods, other paraphernalia. People of all ages talking excitedly; many different languages being spoken. Chess has the capacity to bridge cultural divides, to be understood (and to mystify) all of us, wherever we are from. Everyone in the queue has felt something of the same calling, the same desire to witness.

I stand next to a man from San Francisco, a Caruana fan, who tells me he had to be here. He talks of Fischer. What another U.S. world champion might do for chess in America. He has travelled the world. Everywhere I take out my chess board people appear and want to play, he says. A sparkle in his eyes. We are joined by a couple from Yorkshire, making a day of it. A hotel booked and dinner planned afterwards. Life's too short not to come along if you can, he says. It's a very different experience to watching on your screen. Just you wait, he promises...

It starts to rain heavily and we hope they will open the doors early and let us in, but they don't. The comfort of those who pay for tickets is not always fully considered, the same with any sport. Eventually the sun comes out and finally we are inside.

The first surprise awaits. There was no warning, but it transpires tickets do not give unfettered access to the playing hall. Rather, I am given a card that gives me a half an hour time-slot, after which I will need to return to get another such card. I am given differing reasons by the staff: FIDE rulings on crowd circulation, just how it is, and the size of the playing hall all mooted. The latter seems most likely. It is difficult to imagine paying customers at other events accepting this arrangement with the same level of passivity, as everybody does today.

I take my ticket and make my way into the auditorium. The theatre itself is tiny. Rows of benches to sit on, all crowded. Dark curtains reminiscent of a 1970s school hall. A black backboard behind the players plastered with white sponsors logos. Soundproof glass separates Carlsen and Caruana from the fans, but still no one speaks above a whisper. There are no player introductions or welcomes. No recap on the time limit or the match rules. No headphones in the main theatre to listen to the commentary. The extent to which this has been designed for those who choose to attend in person perhaps a little questionable. I chat to Dylan Mize, an aspiring artist, here to help with the stewarding and planning on drawing some pictures of the protagonists. We swap details and later he sends me a sketch.

The players are on stage now. Caruana pushes his king's pawn forward two squares and we are underway. Banks of camera crews

The big day has dawned, but like the other spectators, Ben Graff is forced to wait outside The College until close to the 3pm start. Spectators could have been much better looked after and despite some high ticket prices were limited to just half an hour in the playing hall.

crowd the board, but after the first few moves they retreat and I take in the scene. Carlsen is wearing a light grey jacket, Caruana's number a darker shade. They each have two water bottles on the table, one bright turquoise, one clear. Expensive black and white pens provided by a sponsor. The red and white chess clock looks no different to a club model. The chess pieces lovingly crafted. Caruana has the air of a junior scientist about him. Large glasses, intelligent eyes, whippet thin. Carlsen thicker set in comparison. Something a little bit more knowing about his mannerisms, the way he owns the space; this his fourth world title match to Caruana's first and somehow it shows.

There is an excitement and a tension that comes from the world number one and two slugging it out, just a few feet away. An immediacy to the proceedings. Even through the glass it is possible to imagine a connection. We are all breathing the same air. On move eight, Caruana pushes his pawn to the a3-square and Carlsen pauses, swivels in his chair and turns to face the audience. It is only later that I learn that the glass is unidirectional and he is in no way looking at the spectators. That the gap between us and them at another invisible level is bigger than I thought.

As I look in at Carlsen appearing to look out, I think to other world championship matches. Traffic lights held to green before game two of Spassky-Fischer in Reykjavik in case Bobby decided to play after all and needed to be whisked to the venue in double quick time. The boos and whistles in the Hall of Columns in 1984 as draw followed draw in Karpov-Kasparov. Kasparov-Anand in 1995 on floor 107 of the South Tower six years before the World Trade Centre fell and everything changed forever. This day, here in London, the newest chapter in a story stretching all the way back to Steinitz. The continual quest to determine who is the champion of the world. In the years to come many will read about it, but I will be part of a much smaller group who can say they were there.

I go to the commentary room. Like the playing hall, it is small and hot. A large camera on a tripod. A scary warning sign that if the camera is touched it will swivel both quickly and dangerously. I wait for someone to leave, before inching tentatively around it, squeezing myself in. Judit Polgar and Anna Rudolf are doing the commentary. Both engaging and thought-provoking.

Daniel King, who I had watched playing chess with a man on a musical chess set earlier in the day, later joins them, wishing Anna a happy birthday. Anna shows us the chocolates Judit has bought her. Johann Hjartarson, six-times Icelandic champion, follows Danny's stint at the microphone. He is asked about Bobby and is diplomatic, speaking of Fischer's mental health issues, the painfulness of his views, and says he did not seek him out. Hjartarson declines an invitation to speculate on the state of the game as he is on the appeals committee.

Dylan Mize's sketch captures well an initially confident Carlsen and a hard-working Caruana.

I grab a coffee with our Editor. We perch in the corner of the tiny cafeteria, half an eye on the unfolding live screen action. We talk a little about the state of the match. Whether either player might have a way through, chess publishing, a mutual friend. Richard goes back to work and I take a walk around the venue. A small shop, selling T-shirts and mugs, but no books. A couple of other rooms with chess boards in them, mainly children pushing the pieces, engrossed in their battles. I wonder if one of them will play behind soundproof glass a few years hence while the world watches on. All dreams start somewhere. Anything is possible.

I get a ticket to go back into the main hall. On the board Carlsen is pressing, but the room is hot and crowded. As I want to know what the experts think, I go back to the commentary area. Anna Rudolf's birthday wish, that we get a decisive result today, appears to be a long shot. Danny King has already said it is 99% going to be a draw. At one point, Judit and Anna debate the merits of Nf1 versus f4. Both are strong possibilities. A poll is conducted. As an audience, we are evenly split.

I vote for f4 and as Judit counts the votes, for a moment she catches my eye. I feel ten feet tall, that this is participation, not just watching. Nf1 appears on the board soon after. Finally, the game collapses in on itself. Judit muses that Carlsen's Nc5 might not be the best choice, that he might have been able to squeeze for a little longer, but the end would have been the same. Caruana gives up his knight to force a theoretical draw and the players shake hands.

I return to the main hall for the press conference. The first time the players are not separated by glass from the audience, but initially normal ticket holders are not allowed in. Ultimately it transpires that there is space and we are ushered through. Daniel King conducting the interview. Carlsen not happy with his opening. Caruana saying it was his subsequent error that gave Carlsen the best of the game. Just a coincidence, that Black has had the initiative once more; don't read too much into that. Carlsen irritated by unfounded suggestions that he had earlier touched a piece and not moved it. No question, he had said adjust. He says he knows there is a need for stories, but this goes too far. A storm in a teacup Daniel King says soothingly. Then the conference is over and the hall empties.

I make my way through the dark November evening to the Tube and the train. A return to normal life. Adrenaline coursing through my body, much as it does after actually playing. I try to collect my thoughts. The venue was too small. The ticketing policy unorthodox. More could be done with an eye to the fan who actually pays their money and makes the trip. If soundproof glass is necessary, are there other ways to create a direct connection between the players and the followers? A three o'clock start time also not ideal for games that can go late into the night. Another limiting factor for those who lack the time or the money to stay in London.

Still, none of this detracts from a really good day. Completely different from watching online. A theatre and a chess board. The two best players in the world battling it out only yards from my seat. A communal experience, with all the compromises that it can bring, but also all the benefits. I have been part of an audience coming together over a shared love of chess. Have formed new friendships. Gained a better understanding of what these matches feel like in the arena, in the moment, as chess history is shaped move by move. In some small way I have been a part of something special. Something that I will remember.

Chess for Common People

Tim Wall shares the joys of the packed press room at Game 12 of the big match

"She came from Chile,
she had a thirst for knowledge,
She sang chess songs at St Martin's College,
That's where I ... caught her eye.
She told me that FIDE was loaded,
I said, 'In that case,
I'll have a vodka cocktail.'"
('Common People', Pulp)

Without a doubt, this month's top chess event was the British Rapidplay in Ilkley, West Yorkshire. It was situated in a slightly crumbling hotel just off T' Moors (Baht 'at), fondly described by one wall-kicking visiting grandmaster as like the one from *The Shining*...

Just kidding.

It was, of course, the world championship match at The College, in central London, between Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana. The setting was epic, chess was now officially "cool" according to Magnus... and the games were drawn (at least, the classical games were – they had the fun play-off only two days after I visited).

The lucky few with tickets (at 70 quid a pop, or if you're a blagging journalist – free, minus your soul) could gain admittance to the slightly crumbling Victorian Gothic Horror building, a place once immortalised by Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker and a Greek student who (allegedly) later married Varis Varoufakis, the radical, Harley Davidson-riding finance minister.

Once past the KGB (sorry, walkie-talkie-toting security guards) outside, inside everything was dark and dimly lit. The immediate impression was that I had in fact stumbled into a cross between Dracula's Castle and a Ginger GM fancy dress/chess party in a London crypt. I half expected to see 'Jarvis [heart] Danae' carved into one of the columns, or at least in the Gents, but alas it was not to be.

Wandering around the gloomy Hogwarts corridors (followed by an army of young security people eager to check my colour-coded armband every few steps), I wondered what would be in each room.

Eager for play to begin - Each matchday a steady stream of ticket-clutching spectators built up in Holborn, but how many knew that access to the auditorium would be limited to half an hour?

Kama Sutra, Judit Polgar & Jon Speelman

In one, there were overpriced T-shirts with the infamous World Chess 'Kama Sutra' logo, and in some others were people playing skittles chess. Then there was a small commentary room with space for 20 spectators – it was actually cool to be up close to the presenters, Judit Polgar and Anna Rudolf ('Holy Stalker Alert, Batman!').

I had half-hoped that in one of the rooms I would bump into Juga de Prima, the famous Chilean chanteuse and chess enthusiast whose hit song 'Oh, Capablanca' had made her the darling of the chess community, and resulted in her being interviewed all over the London media during the match. But alas, my would-be autograph-hunting was in vain.

The auditorium itself was again quite small (with maybe room for 120-150 people, sitting not-so-comfortably on wooden benches). In front of us were other, largely empty, wooden benches, marked with 'VIP' labels and being guarded jealously by more security people.

Magnus and Fabi were behind a one-way glass partition, which was soundproofed (for about 99.9% of the time, I'm told). At the start of the game, they were completely obscured by photographers, so we had the surreal experience of watching them for 10 minutes on overhead TV screens, even though we were just a few metres away.

After the initial flurry of Sicilian Sveshnikov moves (I was lucky enough to go on the day of Game 12), the pace slowed – and the spectators were kicked out (you could go in for only half an hour at a time officially, but it was in fact easy to sneak back in, despite the security).

I found the Press Room, filled with about 50 chess journalists and, for some strange reason, veteran world championship organiser Stewart Reuben. It was well equipped; just again small. There were about 30 workspaces, 35 chairs, a hot water boiler, teabags, Nescafe and some Rich Tea-like biscuits. (Journalists always want to know about the refreshments – you have no idea how long Magnus's endgames will go on for.)

Not having a regular workspace or chair, like the people who were working (very hard, I have to say) there every day, instead I perched on a small sofa next to John Saunders, a fellow former *British Chess Magazine* editor, and we watched the game on a TV screen, while checking engine analysis and Twitter feeds on our mobile phones (just like I had been doing, far more comfortably, at home in Newcastle).

When I had been watching Games 1 to 11 from home, I had enjoyed watching the Super GM commentary by Chess24 and other teams, even if I felt it was above the level it really needed to be for ordinary chess players (apparently Norwegian TV was the one media that seemed to get the level right for the

'chessplayer on the street', if reports are to be believed, and full marks also to *The Guardian* for running very accessible live updates on its website). Yet now I was at the venue, it seemed silly to plug into a computer. I wanted to talk to people, observe and soak up the atmosphere.

There were actually lots of famous chess people in the Press Room, from Daniel King to Jon Speelman (he was intravenously hooked up to *Sesse*, the Norwegian super-computer, desperate not to miss any of its analysis). The atmosphere was about as nervous and tense as it was for the players. One piece of light relief for me was the appearance of IM Bill Hartston, the famous presenter of the BBC's *Master Game* programme – and nowadays a regular TV commentator not on chess, but on *Gogglebox*.

As the assembled chess journalists clucked away over their Sesse analysis variations, Bill told me a funny story about another darkened room. On *The Master Game*, it was one guy's job to dress up in a black leotard and move the pieces on a demo board – this was before computers, ChessBase or the internet. It turned out that Bill had to also do commentary for a German TV version of the programme. His German wasn't great, and the leotard-clad demo board operator (who didn't know much about chess) was actually a German language professor. "He should have done the presenting, and I should have moved the pieces," Bill said, with the hint of a nostalgic smile.

VIP vodka cocktails & Russian oligarchs

Returning to the sofa, it turned out my seat was not entirely safe – it was on a timeshare with Stewart Reuben, so I went for a wander to see if I could enter the Inner Sanctum, the VIP Area. According to the WorldChess.com website, the VIP Golden Tickets were going for an eye-watering £600 each, so I didn't really expect to blag my way in – but I thought I'd try.

At that point, inevitably, the KGB appeared. Since my armband was green, and not made of pure-spun gold, I was denied entry.

Later I did see various people stumbling out of the VIP area, however, apparently after imbibing several drinks. There were some grandmasters, but I was also surprised to see Malola Prasath, a vaguely FIDE-connected junior organiser from County Durham, who emerged from the VIP area with a sheepish grin on his face.

I quizzed them: "Were there free vodka cocktails there?" Check.

"Russian oligarchs and their beautiful companions?" Check.

"Dancing girls?" "Nope, I didn't see any, not even any mermaids."

Mmm. I was suspicious. And unfortunately, stone cold sober.

The standing hulk, one of the army of security personnel, almost defies the audience not to ask any awkward questions, while Daniel King probes the players for some honest answers.

Missing Halley's Comet

Negotiating my way past yet more security people, I made my way back to the Press Room, thinking I might at least get a cup of tea and a Ginger Nut.

Just as I arrived, the whole room burst into uproar, and most of the journalists ran past me into the corridor, giving the security people a fit.

It turned out that Magnus had just offered a draw – when *Sesse* said he was clearly better. Magnus offering a draw? That never happens. It was as if I had missed Halley's Comet because I had popped out from the Hubble telescope for five minutes to get a pint of milk.

The Football Question

We soon all crowded into the darkened Auditorium, now kitted out for the Game 12 Press Conference, moderated by Daniel King.

Various chessy questions were asked – the 'big guns' chess websites were invited to ask questions first. "Why hadn't Magnus played on when *Sesse* said he was winning?" When a lip-curling Magnus said he was happy to get into the rapid play-offs and "didn't care" what the computer said, I could have cheered – of course, to play such a nerve-wracking game and be relieved to survive your last Black, that was a completely human reaction.

Eventually I got to ask my question. Feeling a bit like the reporter from *Horse and Hound* from the Julia Roberts film *Notting Hill*, I said: "Tim Wall, ECF Newsletter. Magnus, will you risk playing football on the rest day tomorrow?"

Thankfully, Magnus didn't scoff or scowl at the thought of another black eye, after the first one caused by (accidentally, one hopes) head-butting a Norwegian journalist. He just said, "Maybe – why not?"

Now I don't know whether the game of football took place the next day, or not. But I'd like to think that it did, and it helped Magnus relax and prepare mentally for the Rapid Play-offs the day after that.

After travelling back to Newcastle, two days later I was sitting in another darkened room with several of my club mates at Forest Hall Chess Club, watching the rapid play-offs. We'd borrowed a projector and turned a table on its side to create a makeshift screen. It wasn't that much different from being in the room with Magnus and Fabi. We could have a pint and listen to the commentary, and we got to hear the players' reactions after Magnus's sweeping victory at the press conference.

As Magnus said, he doesn't listen to advice – and yet he won the trophy. Who knows, just maybe he listened to the suggestion to play a bit of football, while Fabi was hunched over a computer preparing his openings. I'd like to think so. Permit me that delusion, at least...

This article first appeared in the ECF's online monthly newsletter.

A Royal Occasion

Shreyas Royal gave his first clock simul at Uxbridge Chess Club, watched by Peter Lord

Many people, especially in the London area, will be familiar with Hayes Chess Club. We were founded in 1954, and have had many good years, winning various leagues, divisions and cups. George Leyton, David LeMoir, Paul Girdlestone, Arthur Moppett, Peter Ackley, Charlie Nettleton, David Okike and other 'legends' will be names recognised by hundreds if not thousands of chessplayers. Many of our ranks have also played for other great clubs like Drunken Knights and Kings Head.

As with almost all clubs, our venue circumstances have changed from time to time, and we moved to the Ivy Leaf Club in Uxbridge in 2014. The Ivy Leaf is a spin-off of the British Legion from whom they split decades ago, but it's very similar. As a result of the move to Uxbridge we imaginatively renamed the club 'Uxbridge Chess Club' (or UCC), though we retain a lot of the Hayes Chess Club's philosophy, such as enjoyment being at a premium. To this end we arranged a series of simultaneous displays in the 2000s, entertaining the likes of Harriet Hunt, Keith Arkell, James Plaskett and Colin Crouch.

It was a great pleasure that it was arranged for young Shreyas Royal to give his first ever clock simultaneous at our club. Readers of *CHESS* magazine will be familiar with the lad, and know that he is the second best nine-year-old in the world (at the time of writing). Of course, it's very unusual for a junior to give a simultaneous exhibition. Before the war there were several famous child 'prodigies' who did so, notably Capablanca and Reshevsky. Capa even visited the current West London club at Chiswick Town Hall.

Using words like 'prodigy' and 'genius' are not only unhelpful, but liable to misinterpretation. I think you can have a high IQ and be an indifferent chessplayer, or vice versa. All I will say is that Shreyas is an exceptionally talented chessplayer with good potential to really progress far. Anyway, he had never given a clock simul before, so it was a minor coup for our old club that he did this for us.

Friendly enthusiast Abu Hasan joined us at UCC a few years ago, and he's also a mainstay at the British Bangla Chess Association (BBCA), who play in the London League. Shreyas' father, Jitendra Singh, was also connected to the BBCA and Shreyas had been runner-up in a tournament there in 2015, so he is quite a veteran already!

At UCC we experienced a dip in membership a few years ago, but just lately some enthusiastic new members are causing a revitalisation of the club. All credit especially to the progressive and enthusiastic Knight brothers, David and Danny. The latter has recently resurrected the Uxbridge Junior Chess Club www.uxbridgejuniorchessclub.com from scratch, which has caused an upsurge in the membership. Together with his brother, Danny's made many improvements to our chess environment and enjoyment. Recently he's organised a friendly match with Brunel University and many more friendlies and competitions for the juniors.

An eight year old Sammy Reshevsky playing some older chaps in Paris in 1920, one of a large number of exhibitions given by the then American prodigy. In the front row it appears as if Sir Alf Ramsey sits next to Billy Connolly, and, gasp, there is even a woman in the audience!

Shreyas had to cross all of London from Kent to get to us on a 'school' night, so we were flattered that he and his father came to Uxbridge. Danny arranged the Shreyas simul against 17 of our juniors, who also included four youngsters who travelled in from Maidenhead.

As long-term UCC Secretary, I had little to do on the night, except feed Martin, the local newspaper reporter, some facts for the general (i.e. lay) *Gazette* readership. I am used to this, as often after a match I'm at the local pub, regaling various non-chess friends briefly with our evening's disasters, err, adventures, but only when asked of course.

Everyone knows the moves, but 99% don't want to come along for fear of being humiliated, despite my (optimistic) protestations to the contrary. If only a member who shall remain nameless was not so absolutely determined to win every friendly game... At least afterwards he always kindly explains to them where they went wrong! At the pub I only gently encourage non-chessplayers to come along, as it's a relief to have a drink and not talk chess. To paraphrase someone, 'What do they know of chess, who only chess know?' But I digress.

The Clock Simul

All assembled in the room upstairs where we meet. An air of excitement pervaded, as juniors took their places and parents looked on, as parents do. Danny picked up Shreyas and Jitendra from the tube station, and all the planning and preparation was in place.

Our head coach is David Okike. He works tirelessly for Chess in Schools and Communities and helped initiate our Junior Club a few years ago, selflessly going without any stipend whilst it became established. David plays as many games as he can for us on top board, often after many hours teaching at different sites. That's quite impressive, and our teams are always lifted when he can play.

Left - Pictured with Uxbridge member Abu Hasan, the smartly-dressed simul giver himself, Shreyas Royal. Though it was his first clock simul, Shreyas was a calming influence on even the most inexperienced of his young opponents. Right, he queries just whose move it is with Uxbridge Junior Chess Club's Head Coach, David Okike. In the end, impressively Shreyas remained unbeaten and conceded just the one draw.

As anyone who has coached juniors en masse will know, attracting and keeping their attention for any length of time can be almost impossible. However, David is a master of tutoring and demonstrating, and a hush descended when he introduced Shreyas to us all. Shreyas stood at the front, smartly dressed in suit and tie, and of modest demeanour. It was quite surreal and exciting to have a world famous chessplayer in our midst.

David opined that Shreyas would undoubtedly become a GM, which is quite a prediction for a nine-year-old. I think some of us secretly hoped that there would not be too many demanding expectations assigned to him, and that he would be allowed to progress naturally and steadily. The great Dr. John Nunn once wrote that you only need to improve your grade seven points a time, and you will soon be a strong player. I suspect Shreyas currently has greater ambitions, certainly at nine years of age.

The evening's entertainment began with a demonstration of one of Shreyas' wins. Perhaps the word 'demolition' best describes the game. It was Royal-Nugith, Major Open, Hull 2018. The game was new and interesting to most of us, though it appeared in September's *CHESS*, so I won't repeat it here.

In true tutor mode, David invited the juniors to suggest moves at the culmination of the attack. Though captivated by the demonstration, none could do this, and Shreyas also got caught up in the excitement, helping David with some comments and ideas. The attack crashed through, and a big round of applause followed.

We mortals may only dream of that happening, but usually our 'brilliancies' go completely unnoticed (I wonder why?). Thankfully I was not required to shower the position with gold coins; it would anyway have been difficult on a vertical TV screen.

Having shown the opposition what they could be about to experience, Shreyas began the simul. I have to point out that of Shreyas' 17 opponents, many were not much better than novices, with a few exceptions. Certainly few, if any, had played in a simul before. I surmised their ages were from 6 to 11. Each had 30 minutes on his clock to Shreyas' hour. Some of the less experienced took a few moves to get the hang of it, playing two consecutive moves as black, or not pressing the clock, or just not being ready to move.

I worried that this could be a problem, but Shreyas himself took over, kindly and firmly adjusting to the correct situation, and moving on. This was one overriding impression I got, that here was a serious but kindly soul, who was interested in each game for its own sake, but polite and well-mannered even when opponents got confused. No ego was apparent; Shreyas is just a courteous, generous, thoughtful 9-year-old boy. I heard comments about how 'mature' he seemed.

He circulated clockwise as the adults chatted to each other and the minutes ticked by. Danny had laid on tea and coffee for the adults, and water for the competitors. The bar also had customers.

Some of my time was spent talking to Martin, the local reporter, who bombarded me with questions, such as 'What are the advantages of playing chess?'. The next day I sent him a long list of useful facts, which he used as a basis for a column in the local *Gazette*. Although a non-chessplayer himself, Martin gamely stayed to the end, and interviewed several people.

I also grabbed a few minutes with Shreyas's father, Jitendra, as I was interested in how Shreyas' education was going. Again I was impressed that there was a sensible educational strategy in place, and I was reassured that the plan had been carefully thought out with Shreyas' best interests at heart. Jitendra also said that the whole family is behind him. They travel with him to tournaments for the whole weekend. The previous week they'd been in France and the next weekend would be spent in Spain. Most gratifyingly, Jitendra remarked, "We don't have any expectation of him, we just want him to enjoy it."

As with all simuls, it took a while for the first opponents to succumb, then it became fairly regular. The whole simul took 90 minutes. Shreyas was understandably getting quite tired towards the end, and his legs were rubbed to keep him going. He also conserved energy by seemingly not moving his left arm at all. I expect some of his opponents didn't know when to resign, but Shreyas remained cheerful and diligent.

Finally there were only three games left, including one against 8-year-old Rudra Debnath. It couldn't have been, but it looked like a fairly unresolved early middlegame, with Black having some pressure on the queenside. Shreyas' queen had limited mobility, and was subjected to repeated attacks. I think maybe he could have moved it away, but the situation was complicated and a draw by repetition was agreed, much to Rudra's delight.

So an "exhausted" Shreyas' final score was: P17, W16 D1 L0.

There's no room for it here, but David Okike later referred me to the English Primary School Chess Association website (www.epsca.org.uk), where there is more information on Shreyas' chess career. I was very pleased to discover that he is a Kent Junior, as that's how I started. But I was a relatively ancient 16 when I first played for the county, though like all chessplayers, I still harbour hopes of a late grading spurt...

A Year in Review

Continuing from last month, Sean Marsh presents more of the best works of 2018

What will the New Year bring? Lots of great chess books and DVDs, hopefully.

Time now to take a look at some recent products and to catch one or two that almost fell through the gaps of last year's reviews.

Caruana: Move by Move
Cyrus Lakdawala, 368 pages
Everyman Chess
RRP £18.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.09**

It is interesting to see if this book, offering an optimistic viewpoint on the strengths of Caruana, matched the reality of the situation during the world championship. The author knew the match would be very close and writes: "I'm guessing that Carlsen is an approximate 55%-45% favourite to retain his title."

There follows an interesting comparison on the respective strengths and weaknesses of the two players, across a plethora of categories from opening preparation all the way through to converting an advantage. Carlsen comes out significantly ahead from the chosen criteria, but Lakdawala stuck to his close percentage opinion and predicted a 6½-5½ victory for Carlsen. Interesting!

There are six chapters, with each one covering a different aspect of Caruana's game: Attack, Defence and Counterattack, Dynamic Element, Exploiting Imbalances, Accumulating Advantages, and Endgame.

Defence and counterattack were very much on the agenda during the world championship match, so chapter two is of particular interest. The opening paragraph sums up the good and bad side of Lakdawala's prose: "Being in trouble is not the same thing as being in a crisis of faith and I'm pretty sure that some poet, somewhere, wrote that each passing day is a new beginning, no matter how bad your day was yesterday. In this chapter we examine Caruana's skill in positions where life has gone wrong and his position is under pressure, to one degree or another, or in positions where he must defend and counterattack accurately to consolidate."

The message is fine, but why not find a name and quote for the poem – or leave it out? To satiate the reader's inquisitive mind, the poem would presumably be 'Each Day is a New Beginning' by Gail Grierson.

Each day is a new beginning,
If you don't dwell on the past;
Happiness will come to you
When you don't let sadness last.

Wise words, which would have been pertinent to the title match, too.

Here is a particularly good example of Caruana on the counterattack against Carlsen, something he certainly had to do in London.

F.Caruana-M.Carlsen
Sao Paulo 2012

It has been a turbulent game and Caruana now has a choice between the solid 79 ♔c1 and a big – but unclear – counterpunch. Interestingly, he chose the latter, which is questioned by Lakdawala, who prefers the former.

79 ♖xe4? dxe4 80 f5 ♔g2?

"After this mistake the assessment changes from winning for Black to equal. 80...♖b1! is winning, although the process remains lengthy."

81 ♔e3 ♖b2??

"81...♖b1! draws." Now the white pawns turn out to be too strong.

82 d5 ♖xc2 83 d6 c3 84 d7 ♖d2 85 d8♕ ♖xd8 86 ♗xd8 h4 87 gxh4! g3 88 f6 c2 89 ♔d2 e3+ 90 ♔xc2 e2 91 ♗a5 1-0

A game offering intriguing questions. Was 91 ♗a5 just outside of Carlsen's calculating horizon? Was he unused to an opponent offering such stern resistance over the course of such a lengthy game? Did he find it difficult to recalibrate his thoughts after Caruana's brave sacrifice of the exchange?

This book offers a sound examination of Caruana's game, complete with Lakdawala's trademark flowery prose, which will either delight or depress the reader. Here is a sample: "Fabiano succumbs to the temptation to punish Carlsen, since for the normally aggressive Caruana to play passively for so long is the same feeling a chain smoker gets when having to go cold turkey without a cigarette on a 12-hour flight."

If we see another C vs C (remember when it was always K vs K?) title match in two years' time then it will be interesting to see if Caruana's play has improved further – and in which departments.

ChessBase continue to produce an admirable amount of instructional DVDs. Each one offers considerable value for money, with some of the running times extending beyond seven hours.

Perhaps it was the thought of the title match in London that made my thoughts gravitate towards this duo of world champion-related DVDs.

Master Class Vol. 10 – Mikhail Botvinnik
Marin, Müller, Pelletier & Reeh
ChessBase PC-DVD;
running time: 8 hours, 17 inutes
RRP £26.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.29**

Any chess player who has never studied the life and games of Botvinnik really is missing out. A dominant force at the top from the late-1940s to the mid-1960s, his terrific title matches against Bronstein, Smyslov, Tal and Petrosian offer a wealth of chess lessons in so many different areas. His strategic plans were always well to the fore, but his adaptability – based on his ultra-serious scientific approach to chess – saw him win back his title twice.

Very few people would have given Botvinnik a chance of beating Tal in their 1961 rematch, but nevertheless he did so – and in crushing style to boot. The story of his fabulous career also carries some unanswered questions, including mysteries featuring Keres and Bronstein. Were dark forces at work? We will probably never know, as the people who could (and probably should) have come clean are no longer with us.

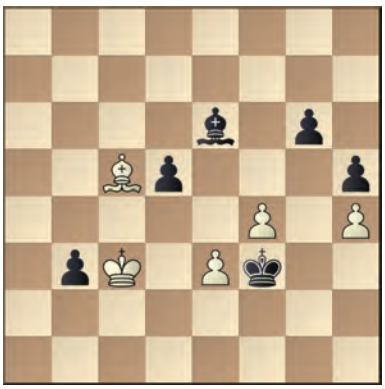
There are various ways to study Botvinnik's games, with many available books, but this DVD adds a very welcome interactive touch, with numerous video lessons by Pelletier (on openings), Marin (strategy), Reeh (tactics), and Müller (endgames, of

course). A big database of 1,235 games is included, along with a short biography by Johannes Fischer, tournament crosstables, repertoire trees for both White and Black, and a tactical test.

Botvinnik was noted for his scientific style and deep preparation. Pelletier's videos cover the great champion's work and experience with the Dutch, Semi-Slav, Grünfeld and then his repertoire against 1 e4 (French and Caro-Kann), and anyone interested in those openings will find the presentations very interesting.

In fact there is much instructional material in all phases of the game. Botvinnik's endgame skill was extraordinary. Even after seeing certain positions so many times there still seems to be certain kind of magic in the air when one sees how he manages to outplay top-class opponents from positions others would give up as drawn.

A.Kotov-M.Botvinnik
USSR Ch., Moscow, 1955



It must have taken great skill and extreme confidence to play **1...g5!!** in this position and then after **2 fxg5** (2 hxg5 allows the h-pawn to run) to follow up immediately with **2...d4!**. There is a lot happening here and Müller guides the viewer nicely through the intricacies.

There is room for improvement in the DVD. The short biography only scratches the surface and could easily be expanded. The annotations to the games in the database are the typical language-less affair. It would be good to see a selection of the best games with new annotations and how about a list of books by or about Botvinnik for further reading?

Nevertheless, there is a gold mine of instruction to be found in Botvinnik's games and anyone neglecting a study of the classics really is missing out on an excellent road to self-improvement. After all, he was a dominant force at the summit, with a world championship career lasting from 1948 to 1963.

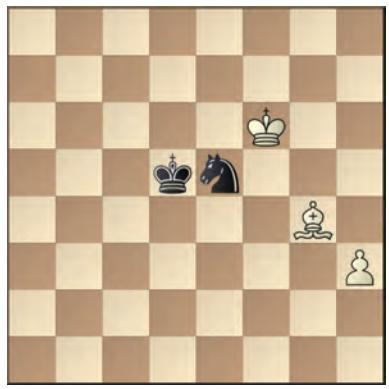
Endgames of the World Champions – From Fischer to Carlsen
Karsten Müller, PC-DVD;
running time: 8 hours, 17 mins, ChessBase
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

It is impossible to keep Müller away from endgames. This new DVD takes advantage of the publicity generated by the Carlsen-Caruana match to offer the student a practical guide to a selection of endgames from some of the giants of chess. The champions in question are Fischer, Karpov, Kasparov, Kramnik, Anand and Carlsen.

We know what to expect from Müller: top-quality video lessons that manage to be highly instructive yet accessible to players of all levels. This DVD continues the trend.

We hear a lot about Carlsen's ability to win from an endgame position offering such slim chances of success, but it is easy to forget he was by no means the first player to be successful in this department.

R.Fischer-M.Taimanov
2nd matchgame, Vancouver 1971



Fischer crushed Taimanov 6-0 in this famous Candidates match. It should not be forgotten that Taimanov was one of the world's top players at the time. Fischer's ability to squeeze out the tiniest of winning chances brought him many important victories. Here he hasn't even got the 'correct' bishop to help promote the pawn by protecting the queening square and yet still manages to win.

Müller points to three drawing moves for Black (81...♔d6; 81...♔d4; 81...♘d3), but a demoralised and tired Taimanov played **81...♔e4?** and that was all Fischer needed to help him win:

82 ♗c8! ♔f4 83 h4 ♘f3 84 h5 ♘g5 85 ♗f5 ♘f3 86 h6 ♘g5 87 ♔g6 ♘f3 88 h7 ♘e5+ 89 ♔f6 1-0

It is magical to see such a conversion.

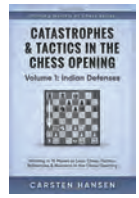
Elsewhere Müller spends time looking at various drawing methods and zones, while supplying plenty of instruction in other departments, such as outside passed pawns, when to exchange, and how use the king actively.

Presumably more DVDs could eventually follow, focusing on other champions. Meanwhile, this one makes for excellent and instructive viewing.

British Chess Literature to 1914*
Tim Harding, 394 pages
McFarland
RRP £44.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £40.45**

I felt it was a quiet year for this famous American publisher. However, historians will be happy with Tim Harding's paperback treatise of chess literature, which shows an admirable depth of research.

The chess columns from 1813-1914 receive excellent coverage and are a reminder of just how popular chess was in the printed press of the bygone age. This book will have little appeal to the practical player, but it would be a shame if such books didn't receive a mention.



Catastrophes and Tactics in the Chess Opening Volumes 1-9*
Carsten Hansen, 300 pages
Self-published
RRP £12.99 (each) **SUBSCRIBERS £11.69**

Lovers of quick wins and opening traps need to investigate the new series by Carsten Hansen, which has now run to an impressive nine volumes.

"We all dream of winning our games fast, using excellent opening preparation, flashy tactics and then mate our opponents." These games "Are typically between players with a rating of at least 2350 and often well more than that", plus "Several games played by players rated over 2600."

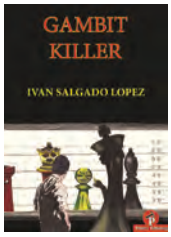
Each book has an average of 140-150 examples of early catastrophes and some of the names who have been caught out are indeed big fish. It doesn't have to be the sharp openings that will induce early errors. Another way is to lull the opponent with a false sense of security by using a non-aggressive opening, such as the Torre Attack.

Ye Rongguang-L.Van Wely
Antwerp 1997

It is clear that Black's position is not under pressure and as Hansen demonstrates, any of 7...♘c6, 7...♘bd7 or 7...cxd4 would have been fine. However, Van Wely preferred the

careless **7...b6??** and was no doubt shocked to see **8 ♗xf6! ♗xf6 9 ♗d5**, after which he played on just a little while longer before resigning.

These are exactly the sort of traps that can prove extremely effective at club level (I remember springing something almost identical via a Torre Attack many years ago), and this series will provide plenty more traps where that one came from. All the standard openings are covered and the brevity of the games makes them ideal for mini-lessons for tutors too.



Gambit Killer
Ivan Salgado Lopez, 208 pages
Thinkers Publishing
RRP £25.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.35**

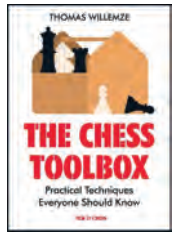
Sometimes it seems that every club player is waiting to spring a dangerous gambit. What to do? It is difficult to prepare for every eventuality; a well-written guide is required and in this one the author states: "I want to give you *only* the information that you need, no more, no less."

The organisation of the material is one of the book's great strengths. For each opening, the author offers an introduction, historical games, a quick-start theory guide, more in-depth theory, an investigation into the typical middlegames arising and, finally, complete games with exercises.

All of the lines arise from queen's pawn openings and they include some of the trickiest – yet respectable – gambits of all, such as the Budapest. This is met by **1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♘g4 4 e3! ♘xe5 5 f4!**.

"There are almost no games with this move [...] I could find only some correspondence games, but not a single GM has tried it! The point is very easy: I want Black to commit the knight, first. Once the knight is played to g6 or c6, I can plan how to place my pieces accordingly."

This is typical of the author's approach throughout the book, as he aims to throw the gambiteer back on his own resources. Yes, it is a tempting proposition and I am sure the lines in this book will allow club and tournament to change their way of thinking. Instead of fearing gambits (and hiding behind the fireproof London System), why not tackle them head-on and try to claim an early advantage? Studying *Gambit Killer* will undoubtedly be a big step in the right direction.



The Chess Toolbox: Practical Techniques Everyone Should Know
Thomas Willemze, 400 pages
New in Chess
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

This book is "Written for the ambitious club player" and in his foreword, John Watson (no stranger to chess reviews) opines the author "Has made a unique and thoughtful contribution to the literature of chess improvement, as well as contributing new insights into several areas of the game." High praise indeed.

The author is keen to not bombard readers with an encyclopaedic coverage of techniques and ideas, but has essentially cherry-picked his way through the sea of chess ideas.

"When you study chess, it is much more effective to become an expert on a limited number of topics than to acquire only a shallow knowledge of almost everything. Drawing from my experience as a trainer, I have carefully selected the most important tools; the ones that I consider to be the most beneficial for your improvement."

The chosen examples are excellent and eye-catching, such as this unusual position.

Z.Efimenko-M.Sebenik
European Team Ch., Halkidiki 2011

White now played the obvious enough **44 ♕h1** and Black...resigned! The tripling up of White's major pieces is a fine example of Alekhine's gun. It is necessary to see a little further than the immediate exchanges to find the winning plan, which is revealed only after 44...♕e7 (as good as anything on offer for Black) 45 hxg5! hxg5 46 ♖xh7 ♖xh7 47 ♖xh7 ♕xh7 48 ♕xh7+ ♔xh7. A glance will be enough to see that the knight cannot emerge without a sacrifice, but just how is White going to create a winning plan from this simplified and blocked position?

The answer lies in the fabulous 49 d4!! when both 49...cxd4 50 ♗c1 ♔g7 51 ♗a3 and 49...exd4 50 ♗g1 ♔g7 51 ♗h2 represent a wonderfully memorable idea. Sebenik really must have had great faith Efimenko's ability to find 49 d4.

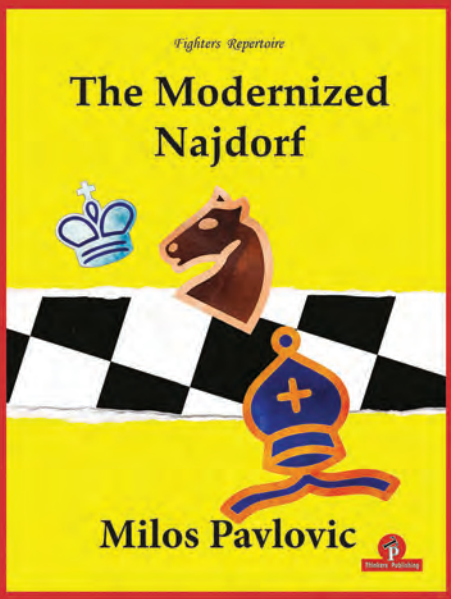
As the author states, "The aim of this book is to make you a better chess player, but never forget: studying chess has to be fun!" He delivers – and in style. This book really does offer a fine combination of hard work and fun.

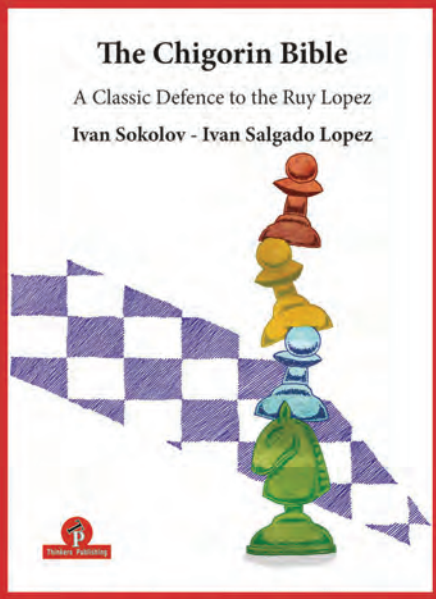
The products reviewed above are all worthy additions to any chess library. There is just enough space left to cast a backward glance and recall which books we reviewed during 2018 are likely to enjoy a lengthy shelf-life.

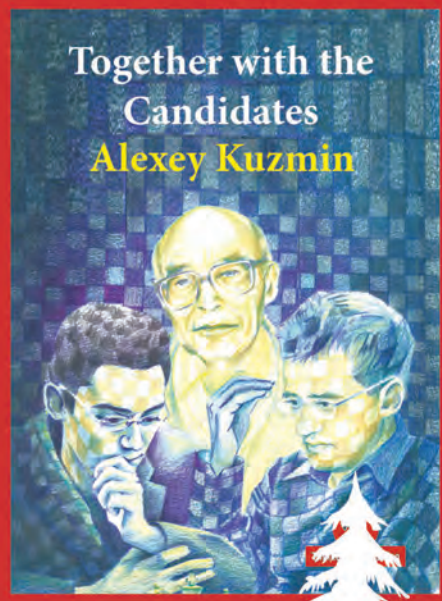
In addition to the English Chess Federation Book of the Year winner for 2018 and the candidates covered last time, the following will keep readers entertained for some time to come: *Evil-Doer: Half a Century with Viktor Korchnoi* by Genna Sosonko (Elk and Ruby), *The Woodpecker Method* by Smith and Tikkanen (Quality Chess), *Chess Calculation Training Volume 3* by Romain Edouard (Thinkers Publishing), *Applying Logic in Chess* by Erik Kislik (Gambit), and *Strategic Chess Exercises* by Emmanuel Bricard (New in Chess). If you missed them in 2018, make sure you add them to your collection as soon as possible during 2019.

I wonder which books will make the shortlist for the 2019 English Chess Federation Book of the Year? It's bound to be another interesting journey.

** - Limited availability. If interested in purchasing a copy of these books, please first contact Chess & Bridge on 020 7486 9848 or via info@chess.co.uk.*



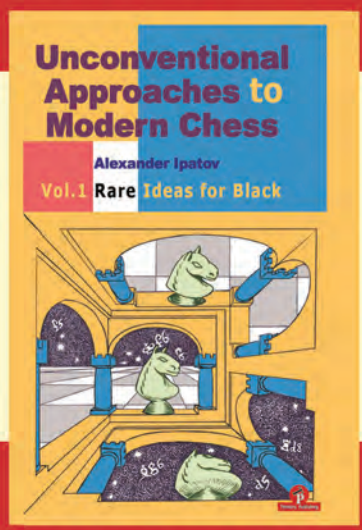




ALWAYS ONE MOVE AHEAD

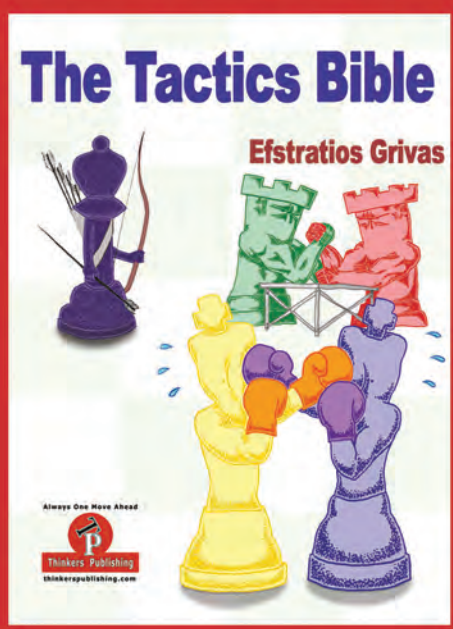
ALL BOOKS AVAILABLE NOW!

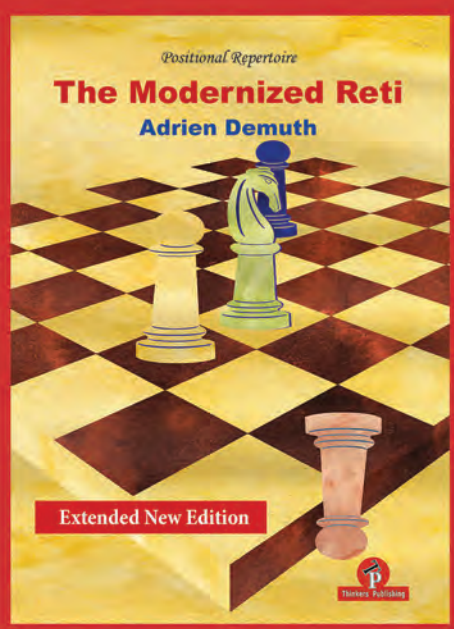
APPROVED BY THE GRANDMASTER



WINTER 2018-2019

WWW.THINKERSPUBLISHING.COM





No Moves

An opponent tied up in knots is every chess player's dream, but Matthew Lunn demonstrates how things can easily go wrong as the full point slips away...

I have frequently made a slow start to the chess season, and this year has been no exception. A few months away from the game does a fair job of dulling the senses, and can turn the most gifted players into clumsy planners.

I am a clumsy planner at the best of times, and frequently make imperfect assumptions about my positions. Frequently I am prone to bouts of pessimism, and this month I have a particularly interesting example. In my second game of the season, I faced a strong and combative opponent, and, to my surprise, quickly reached a position where I had a clear and safe advantage. My opponent seemingly had no moves, but this simplistic mindset can lead to poor calculation, as I discovered.

M.Lunn-T.Villiers
London 2018
Budapest Gambit

1 d4 ♘f6

Last time Tom and I played, the game went 1 b4 ♘a6, so this felt a disappointing opening exchange.

2 c4 e5

But my feelings quickly changed – the Budapest Gambit is a typically combative response, frequently leading to lines that, though positionally favourable for White, offer Black a host of practical chances.

3 dxe5 ♘g4 4 ♗f4 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♗b4+ 6 ♘bd2

6 ♘c3 ♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♕e7 8 ♕d5 holds on to the pawn, but Black has the sort of dynamic play he's after – 8...f6 9 exf6 ♘xf6 10 ♕d3 when Black has counterplay on the f-file and against the doubled isolated c-pawns.

6...♕e7 7 e3

7 a3 seems to clarify the position, but Black has a tactical resource: 7...♘gxe5 8 ♘xe5 (8 axb4 ♘d3# would be unfortunate) 8...♘xe5 9 e3 and White's a2-a3 may prove unnecessary, as Black is sometimes compelled to play ...♗xd2 of his own volition.

7...♘gxe5 8 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 9 ♗e2

My plan is to castle and play ♘b3, leaving Black's bishop with limited squares, and forcing a favourable knight for bishop exchange.

9...♗d6

An offbeat move. Exchanging dark-squared bishops makes a lot of sense, but it's a slow plan and White can obtain a comfortable advantage.

10 0-0 ♘g6 11 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 12 ♘e4

A small mistake. Facing a higher-graded opponent, swapping off queens felt instinctively appealing, as the resultant position carries fewer risks. Nevertheless, 12 ♕c2 is a better move – my queen is better placed than Black's and as ...b6 is well met by ♗f3, his must move again for his bishop to develop effectively.

12...♕xd1 13 ♖fxd1 d6 14 ♖ac1

A natural move, maintaining my developmental advantage. 14 c5 is a good alternative, and perhaps a better practical decision: 14...dxc5 (or 14...f5 15 ♘c3 dxc5 16 ♘d5 and the c7-pawn drops) 15 ♘xc5 (15 ♗b5+ looks tempting, but 15...c6 16 ♘d6+ ♔e7 doesn't leave White with a convincing follow-up) 15...♔e7 16 ♖ac1 and White has very easy play.

14...♗f5 15 ♘g3

A useful tempo gain, but now the c4-c5 pawn break is a little less effective. I had calculated a strong line for me which made up for the misplaced knight, but missed a very simple response.

15...♗d7 16 c5 dxc5 17 ♖xc5

Black can't castle kingside, ...c6 is positionally suspect, and 17...♗c6 is well met by 18 ♘f5 with ♘d4 to follow. Yet positional advantages are often taken for granted, and I was so focused on Black not being able to castle kingside in this line that I missed...

17...0-0-0

...And White's advantage has taken a hit. I was now furious at myself, and given the traditional benefits of an endgame queenside pawn majority, I had to think about three results again, not least as Tom now had a healthy time advantage.

18 ♖cd5

Really, though, the result isn't the most relevant factor. White should be looking for the best move, and swapping off into a minor piece ending cannot be right. My more active rooks convey a small advantage, and I should adjust my mindset accordingly, whereas I was so annoyed at myself for missing a simple move that I just wanted to halve out.

In fact 18 ♘h5 is quite a neat idea, tying Black's rook to the defence of the g-pawn. Moreover, 18...♖hg8 19 ♖a5! (forcing the a-pawn on to a light square; 19 ♖dc1 with f2-f4 and e3-e4 to follow adds some fire to the position) 19...a6 (or 19...♔b8 20 ♖ad5 and Black's king must return to c8, giving me a useful tempo to activate my bishop) 20 ♖ad5 is a better version of the game, meeting 20...♘e7 with 21 ♖5d2 ♗e6 22 a3 with a very small but safe edge (22 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 23 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 24 ♘xg7 ♗xa2 leads to an unbalanced ending, though Black's pawns look faster).

18...♗e6 19 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 21 a3

21 ♘h5 looks less good here as Black's knight is well placed on e5, though 21...♗xa2 22 f4 may be viable.

21...♘e7 22 ♘e4

With a draw offer, which Tom declined – psychologically he has the upper hand, which, coupled with his extra time, wholly justified his decision.

22...♗d5 23 ♘c3 ♗b3 24 ♗f3 b6 25 ♔f1 c5 26 ♔e2 ♗c4+ 27 ♔d2 ♔d7 28 ♗e4 h6 29 ♗d3

I shouldn't lose from here, but it's very easy to feel pessimistic when your opponent plays calmly and quickly.

29...♗b3 30 ♗b5+ ♔e6 31 ♔d3 ♘f5 32 ♗c4+ ♗xc4+ 33 ♔xc4 a6 34 e4 ♘d6+ 35 ♔d3 ♔e5

I have played the ending somewhat competently, and the draw should be in sight. Yet my targeted e-pawn, coupled with the prospect of Black's knight landed on d4, meant I didn't feel out of the woods yet. My perspective was still skewed by my earlier oversight, so I played:

36 ♘a4

A mistake born from a desire to cement the draw, and exacerbated by time trouble. After the game, Tom said that he felt a draw was inevitable after the solid 36 f3, with g2-g3 to follow.

36...♘xe4 37 f3

In light of Black's 37th move, I should play 37 f4+, giving up a pawn in favourable circumstances: 37...♔xf4 38 ♘xb6 and Black's vulnerable queenside pawns give White practical drawing chances.

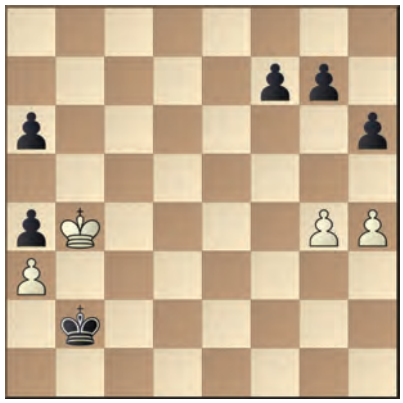
37...b5

I had missed this intermezzo, forcing a winning ending.

38 fxe4

Objectively not the best move, but Black's win is pretty straightforward if I move my knight.

38...bxa4 39 ♔c4 ♔xe4 40 ♔xc5 ♔d3 41 g4 ♔c2 42 h4 ♔xb2 43 ♔b4



The moral of this game is twofold. Firstly, you should always challenge the idea that your opponent has 'no moves', as this leads to poor calculation. Secondly, if your opponent plays a surprising move, it is very easy to lose objectivity. I made the self-destructive decision to jettison a small advantage in favour of a level ending, in the hope of an easy draw against a stronger opponent. And look where that got me.

43...a5+

Yet sometimes we don't get the results we deserve, for worse or better. I thoroughly deserved to lose this game, but my opponent, who has played the ending beautifully up to now, makes a critical mistake. After 43...h5 44 g5 f5 45 gxf6 gxf6 46 ♔xa4 f5 47 ♔b4 a5+ 48 ♔xa5 f4 White's king is too far away, and the a-pawn isn't nearly fast enough.

44 ♔xa4

Exploiting one of those oversights that occur at the end of a long game – Black is still winning, but his job has become a lot harder.

44...h5

The right idea, but as Black has one fewer a pawn in than the previous line, I have gained a valuable tempo. This is very important.

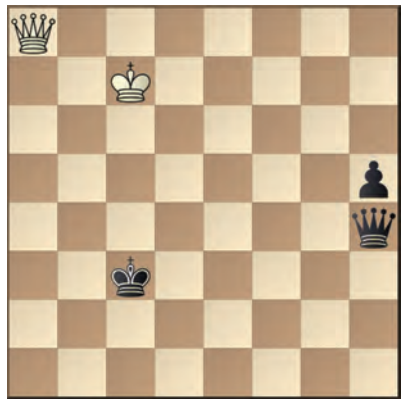
44...♔a2 wins, although Black must play accurately: 45 ♔xa5 ♔xa3 46 ♔b6 ♔b4 47 ♔c6 ♔c4 48 ♔d6 ♔d4 49 ♔e7 (or 49 g5 ♔e4 50 ♔e7 hxg5 51 hxg5 ♔f5 52 ♔xf7 g6 and Black will usher the g-pawn home), when Black must find 49...f5!, with a winning position after 50 gxf5 (likewise, 50 g5 hxg5 51 hxg5 f4 52 ♔f7 f3 53 ♔xg7 f2 54 ♔h7 f1♕ is a winning ending, even if the g-pawn reaches the seventh rank) 50...♔e5 51 ♔f7 ♔xf5 52 ♔xg7 h5.

45 g5 f5 46 gxf6 gxf6 47 ♔xa5 ♔c3

Blocking my route to the f-pawn, and forcing a queen versus queen and pawn ending.

47...♔xa3 is a simple draw, with all lines leading to a king versus king and rook's pawn ending: 48 ♔b5 ♔b3 (48...f5 49 ♔c4 f4 50 ♔d4 ♔b4 51 ♔e4 ♔c5 52 ♔xf4 ♔d6 53 ♔g5 ♔e7 54 ♔xh5 ♔f7 is an obvious draw too) 49 ♔c5 ♔c3 50 ♔d5 ♔d3 51 ♔e6 ♔e4 52 ♔xf6 ♔f4 53 ♔e6 ♔g4 54 ♔e5 ♔xh4 55 ♔f4 ♔h3 56 ♔f3 and White just has to shuffle the king up and down the f-file.

48 ♔b6 f5 49 a4 f4 50 a5 f3 51 a6 f2 52 a7 f1♕ 53 a8♕ ♕f2+ 54 ♔c7 ♕xh4



Even playing on increment, the draw should now be pretty straightforward. I just have to be careful not to run out of checks or allow an exchange of queens.

55 ♕a3+ ♔d2 56 ♕b2+ ♔e3 57 ♕c1+ ♔f3 58 ♕d1+ ♔f4 59 ♕d4+ ♔g5 60 ♕g7+ ♔f5 61 ♕h7+

A lapse in concentration, for which I was lucky not to be punished. 61 ♕d7+ ♔g6 62 ♕e8+ was the way to draw.

61...♔g4

After 61...♔f4 62 ♕f7+ ♔g3 White's position is very tricky – my queen is misplaced and a lot of checks are rendered useless by Black interposing his queen on g3: for example, 63 ♕b3+ ♔g2 64 ♕d5+ ♔h2 65 ♕d2+ ♔h3 66 ♕d7+ ♕g4 and I have run out of useful checks.

62 ♕e4+ ♔g3 63 ♕e1+ ♔g4 64 ♕e4+ ♔g5 65 ♕e7+ ♔g4 66 ♕e4+ ♔h3 ½-½

A hard-fought draw, but had I been a little more mindful in the middlegame, I would not have had to rely on good fortune.

Play Chess From the Comfort of Your Own Home!

National Correspondence Chess Club

Our philosophy:
"To foster friendship between members"

For Beginners to Grandmasters

A wide variety of tournaments
FREE web server chess
FREE bi-monthly magazine

For application form and full details visit our website: **www.natcor.org.uk**

Contact: Des Green, 93 Eldmon Lane, Birmingham, B37 7DN or email: treasurer@natcor.org.uk

How Good is Your Chess?

by Grandmaster Daniel King

As we saw last month, the chess.com Isle of Man tournament took place in late October and resulted in a tie for first place between Radoslaw Wojtaszek and Arkady Naiditsch, with the Polish player winning the blitz play-off.

This was a ridiculously strong tournament with no less than 20 players rated above 2700, including Aronian, Giri, Vachier-Lagrave, Kramnik, So, Anand, Grischuk, Nakamura, Karjakin... and so on. It was fascinating to see how these superstars from elite tournaments fared in an old-fashioned 9-round Open format. The answer was: not always well. In general, their openings were suited to the blocking strategy that is necessary for good results at the top level, but were too stodgy and laborious for an Open. Scoring quick points against (relatively) weaker players in the early rounds is good for preserving energy when it comes to the big games later in the tournament.

I very much enjoyed my role of commentating live from the venue, taking in the atmosphere of the event. And what a venue: the Villa Marina is a beautiful Victorian theatre that is perfectly suited to housing a tournament with all the players in the same hall.

In choosing a game from the tournament for this column I was spoilt for choice. I could have gone for something by one of the winners, but in the end I have selected a spectacular win by the Indian super-prodigy, Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu. In case you have been cut off from the rest of the world, he is the third-youngest player ever to achieve the title of grandmaster, behind Karjakin and Sindarov. He is now thirteen years old, and his rating going into the Isle of Man was 2519. His final score of 5/9 might sound modest, but that included a win against Eljanov and a draw with Leko, and he gained 10 rating points.

Just for clarity I should mention that Rameshbabu is the family name, but he is generally referred to as Praggnanandhaa, or Praggu or Pragg. You take your pick!

A little tip before you start: you will need to calculate well to make a good score. There is also a twist in the tale that will be revealed at the end.

Begin after the first diagram. Whenever Black has moved, stop and try to guess White's reply which will be on the next line. Try to analyse as much as you would in a game – it could earn you bonus points. The article will test your standard of play or, if you prefer, just enjoy a fine game.

R.Praggnanandhaa-T.Ravi
Isle of Man Masters, Douglas 2018
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5 4 h4 h5 5 c4 e6 6 ♘c3 ♘e7 7 ♘ge2 dxc4 8 ♘g3 ♗g6

Apparently, a prudent move. Pragg had prepared for 8...b5 with his coach, GM Ramesh. It's a shaky-looking move and White has plenty of opportunities to destabilise Black's position after 9 ♗g5 ♕b6 10 a4.

9 ♗g5

Three points. The most natural move in this position is, of course, to recapture the pawn: 9 ♗xc4 (*two points*), but it allows Black to free his position easily – as our opponent here knows well: 9...♘f5 10 ♗g5 ♗e7 11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 12 ♘xf5 ♗xf5, Thanki-Ravi, Nagpur 2015. If White's initiative fades then his pawn structure looks overextended. By contrast, Black has no weaknesses in his position.

That's why 9 ♗g5 was played – it cuts across Black's normal development.

9 ♘ge4 would be premature: 9...♘f5 prevents the check on d6 and hits d4.

9...♕b6

10 ♗xc4

Four points. An important move – in this case, time is everything.

Instead, the obvious 10 ♕d2 runs into 10...♘d7 11 ♗xc4 0-0-0, and ...♘xe5 is an awkward threat to meet.

10...♕xb2

Accepting the challenge. Instead, 10...♘d7 11 0-0 0-0-0 (as above) can be met by 12 ♖e1, protecting the e-pawn, and White can maintain the initiative.

11 ♘ce4

Three points. This blocks the bishop's path to b1, and therefore introduces the option of ♖b1.

By contrast, 11 ♘ge4 would be a mistake as it allows 11...♘d5, threatening the knight on c3. White would have to exchange with 12 ♗xd5 exd5, and that's not desirable.

11 ♗d2 is passive. Black can safely reply 11...♘d7 and continue developing.

11 ♖c1 (*one point*) holds the tension and is the best of the alternatives. 11...♘d5 can be met by 12 ♗xd5 exd5 13 ♘xd5 cxd5 14 ♖c8+ with a strong attack.

11...♘f5

12 0-0

Three points. In these kind of complex tactical positions, computers come up with some surprising ideas. Have a look at this: I would reject 12 ♖b3 (*one point*) out of hand because of 12...♗b4+, but even this is playable – if one has miraculous foresight and the imagination to come up with 13 ♔f1 ♘xg3+ 14 ♔g1. Ridiculous. The position after 14...♕a3 15 ♖b3 ♘xe4 16 ♖xa3 ♗xa3 is still in the balance.

12...♘xg3

Instead, 12...♕b4 13 ♕e2 is still unpleasant for Black as after 13...♘xd4 14 ♕d3 he will struggle to bring his king to safety.

13 ♖b1

Three points. Now the fun really starts.

13 ♘xg3 can be met by 13...♗e7 14 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 and the bishop on g6 controls the all-important b1-square, so the queen is safe. 13...♕c2, forcing an exchange of queens, also can't be too bad for Black.

13...♕a3

14 fxg3

Three points. This is a remarkable idea, offering a piece. However, 14 ♘xg3 (*three points*) is also very interesting: 14....♗xb1 15 ♕xb1 gives White tremendous compensation for the exchange. Black has problems protecting the b7-pawn and his king. For example, 15...b5 can be met by 16 ♗xe6! fxe6 17 ♕g6+ ♔d7 18 ♘e4 with a storming attack; 15...♕b4 16 ♕c2, with the threat of ♖b1, is similar.

14...♗xe4

15 ♖xf7

Six points. Sensational. Before we move on to alternatives, a question. What happens on 15...♔xf7? Answer on the next line.

White's attack is quick and crushing: 16 ♖xb7+ ♔e8, and here 17 ♗xe6 is strong, but the most attractive move is 17 ♕f1 with the idea of 17...♗f5 18 ♕xf5. Giving back material doesn't help either: 17....♗e7 18 ♖xe7+ ♕xe7 19 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 20 ♕e1! ♗f5 21 ♕b4+ followed by ♕b7. The queen is proving to be a remarkably agile piece. Take up to *five points* as a bonus, *depending* on how much of this you had foreseen.

There are other beautiful variations, but I won't deprive you of the joy of discovery.

15 ♖xb7 (*three points*) is also very strong: with the idea of 15...♘d7 16 ♖xd7 ♔xd7 17 ♖xf7+ ♔e8 18 ♖b7, and, in spite of being a whole rook up, Black is unable to defend. For example, 18...♕xg3 19 ♕f1 – this idea again.

15...♕xg3

16 ♖f2

Four points. It's curious that the follow-up to this thunderous rook sacrifice is a modest retreat to prevent mate.

Instead, 16 ♕f1 is insufficient to win: 16...♗xg2 17 ♕xg2 ♕xg2+ 18 ♔xg2 ♔xf7 19 ♖xb7+ ♔g8 20 ♗xe6+ ♔h7 21 ♗f5+ ♔g8 22 ♗e6+, with a draw. Very close!

16...b5

Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu is now 13 years old and is pictured here taking on his compatriot Vidit Santosh Gujrathi in the Isle of Man. Both players are renowned for their deep preparation.

17 ♕e1

Four points. Threatening ♖xf8+. This is the most elegant way to proceed – but there were several other good moves.

17 ♗e2 (*three points*) threatens to trap Black's queen with ♖b3, so the queen runs away: 17...♕a3, and then is pushed even further away, 18 ♖b3 ♕a5. White can then concentrate on attacking the king, and both 19 ♗xh5+ and 19 ♗d3 are very strong.

17 ♖b3 (*one point*) forces Black to give up the queen, but there is still some work to do after that: 17...♕xf2+ 18 ♔xf2 bxc4.

17 ♗xe6 (*one point)* is also good, but Black can take some solace in an endgame with 17...♕d3.

17...♗f5

Instead, 17...♕g4 18 ♗e2 traps the queen.

18 ♗xe6

Four points. The simplest move. If 18...♗xe6 19 ♖xf8+ wins the queen.

18 ♕a5 (*two points*) is also good as 18...bxc4 19 ♖b7, keeping the king boxed in, is a killer. Instead, 18...♘d7 19 ♕c7 is good for White, but this is much more complicated than the game.

18 ♖b3 (*one point*) traps the queen, but Black may survive: 18...♕g4 19 ♖f4 bxc4.

18...♕xf2+

19 ♕xf2

Two points. The best move – if you see the follow-up.

19...♗xe6

Under normal circumstances, with bishop, knight and rook for the queen, Black would be fine; but there is nothing normal about this position. The king is still in the middle and the rooks cannot enter the game. All it needs is for the queen to make a breakthrough into the position.

20 d5

Six points. Absolutely decisive. We shouldn't bother with the alternatives.

If Black now plays 20...♗xd5, what is the winning continuation? Some calculation and a variation is required. Answer on the next line.

21 ♕f5 threatens ♕c8+, therefore 21...♘d7. Here it is important to appreciate that 22 e6? ♘f6 holds the position for Black, but 22 ♕g6+ ♗f7 23 ♕xc6 keeps things rolling. The best that Black can do is 23...♗c5+ 24 ♔h2 0-0 (yes, this is still legal!), and the most convincing is 25 e6.

If you got as far as 23 ♕xc6, take *four bonus points*.

20...cxd5

21 ♕c2

Four points. It is beautiful to see how the queen cuts into Black's position along the c-file and the b1-h7 diagonal.

21...♗e7

Instead, 21...♘d7 22 ♕c6 ♗c5+ 23 ♔h2 0–0 24 ♕xe6+ ♖f7 25 ♕xd5 is decisive, while 21...a6 22 ♕c7 leaves Black helpless as 22...♘d7 is a repeat of the previous line: 23 ♕c6, etc.

22 ♗xe7

Two points. The *same score* for 22 ♕g6+ ♗f7 23 ♕g7 ♖g8 24 ♕h7 ♘c6 25 ♖c1, and Black will have to give up more material.

22...♔xe7

23 ♕c7+

Two points.

23...♗d7

24 e6

Two points. Resisting this elegant push would be difficult, but 24 ♕d6+ (*two points*) 24...♔d8 25 e6 ♖e8 26 ♕xd5 is even easier.

24...♖c8

Instead, 24...♔xe6 25 ♖e1+ ♔f7 26 ♕f4+ ♔g8 27 ♖e7 is decisive.

25 ♕b7

One point. The *same score* for 25 ♕e5.

25...♔xe6

26 ♕xa8

One point. The queen is not getting trapped, so that is game over. Resignation would not be out of place, although I would never criticise anyone for not resigning. The opposite in fact: I always liked it when my opponents went to the bitter end, particularly if they allowed checkmate. These are moments to savour.

26...♘c6

27 ♕b7

One point. These next few moves are essentially a mopping-up operation.

27...b4

28 ♕a6

One point.

28...♔d6

29 ♖xb4

One point.

29...♖d8

30 ♖b1

One point. The *same score* for 30 ♖b7.

30...d4

31 ♖c1

One point. The *same* for 31 ♕a3+.

31...♔c7

32 ♕xa7+ 1-0

One point. That really is the end of the game.

Wow. Double wow. Those were my immediate thoughts on seeing this game. Then news filtered through from various sources that all this had been seen before. If one researches this game in the ChessBase online database then Scherbakov-Balta, correspondence 2015, appears. All the same as above, until move 23 when Black deviated with 23...♘d7 24 ♕d6+ ♔f7 25 ♖f1+ ♘f6 26 exf6 gxf6 27 g4 hxg4 28 ♕c7+ ♔g6 29 h5+ ♖xh5 30 ♕c6 ♖ah8 31 ♕xe6, and White eventually won with the extra rook.

That changed my feeling about the performance. This could not have been a coincidence. To be sure, I contacted Sagar Shah from ChessBase India who had been in touch with Pragg on his return home. He confirmed that after preparing the line with his coach Ramesh (see move 8), Pragg had gone a little deeper and discovered, among many other things, the correspondence game. He was lucky enough to get the line at the board and had remembered the continuation until 15 ♖xf7.

So my admiration shifts. Not for an inspirational creative achievement, but rather a superb piece of research, as well as being able to recall and understand it all at the board. Before you harrumph and exclaim that this is just an exercise in memory, I would say that understanding these ideas is not at all simple. Perhaps you'd like to try that yourself? Let's see how easy you find it to pick a tricky variation and research it in the minutest detail. Assuming you are able to remember a previous game in detail, what will happen when your opponent – inevitably – steps away from the preordained path?

In the pre-digital era I also researched opening lines in such depth and occasionally was lucky enough to get in my preparation. This was not against the rules! I simply felt an enormous sense of satisfaction considering the hours I had invested in my work. Therefore I can still appreciate the brilliance of White's attack – and the hard work behind it.

Now add up your points:

0-18	Unlucky
19-36	Average Club Player
37-45	Strong Club Player
46-52	FIDE Master
53-62	International Master
63-72	Grandmaster

Ed. – If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact Daniel directly through his website www.danielking.biz.

Chessable

Learn chess books quickly with our science based training tools.

Chessable.com

@Chessable

YES
THIS BOOK IS OUT NOW!

All match games are analysed in great detail together with portraitsof the protagonists including key games and moments from their careers and a history of the World Chess Championship.

PAPERBACK, 208 PAGES, £17.99

EVERYMAN CHESS

www.everymanchess.com

available through the London Chess Centre: www.chess.co.uk

White Christmas

John Henderson sits down to enjoy a Christmas classic

"I'm dreaming of a white Christmas,
Just like the ones I used to know,
Where the treetops glisten and children listen,
To hear sleigh bells in the snow.
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas,
With every Christmas card I write,
May your days be merry and bright,
And may all your Christmases be white..."

Before Bing Crosby sang that timeless seasonal classic – first in the 1942 movie *Holiday Inn*, and later, the reimagined follow-up 1954 movie *White Christmas*, built around the success of Irving Berlin's Oscar-winning song – the chess world was long dreaming of a White Christmas. But this particular 'White Christmas' belonged not to Bing nor Berlin, but rather to Alain Campbell White (1880-1951), a quietly-spoken wealthy American philanthropist who gained international fame for his passion for chess problems.

White's father, John Jay White, was a wealthy New York real estate magnate who had a passion for solving chess problems, and with his encouragement, Alain, aged 11, also had picked up the solving bug. By this time he also began to try his hand at composition, and his first attempt was published in the December 1891 issue of the Iowa-based *Dubuque Chess Journal*, one of two internationally popular chess magazines of the day.

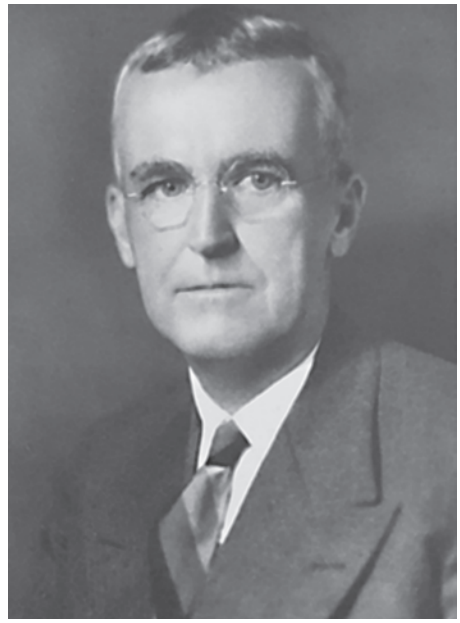
Also, through his father, Alain White became acquainted with a legend who proved to be his inspiration, that being the 'Puzzle King' himself, Sam Loyd, who began to send Alain problems to further test and challenge his new young protégé. Alain went on to become a talented composer in his own right; but his composing skills was overshadowed by the many other administrative activities he undertook in the problem field, such as helping to edit and get published the works of other talented composers.

The first problem book he edited came in 1905, titled *Chess Lyrics: A Collection of Chess Problems*, a collection of compositions of Arthur Ford Mackenzie (1861-1905), one of Jamaica's most remarkable sons, who, although blind, was regarded as one of the great composers of his day. Sadly, it proved to be a posthumous work for Mackenzie, as the book was only published shortly after his death. It was, though, a labour of love for White, but the book had indifferent sales, and he thought it far too expensive for some to buy.

"In one sense, only the publication of *Chess Lyrics* was a failure," said White. "Its sale was satisfactory, as far as the sale of a chess book ever is; but I realised that invalids and owners of few books did not buy it. They could not afford it. Yet they were the ones that I wanted to reach."

White then hit upon the idea of printing, at his own expense, a series of Christmas books – one or two appearing each year-end – to send out as seasonal gifts to his many fellow chess composer friends from all over the world. This led White to publish his fabled 'Christmas Series' from 1905 to 1936, the first in the series unwittingly being Mackenzie's *Chess Lyrics*. Most in the series are hard covers, beautifully bound in an almost Christmas-themed bright red cloth and embossed with gilt lettering, written in English, sometimes in German and French (with one curio being partly in Czech). Printed on the inside page of each of his 44 books (rare or otherwise), White would include his seasonal inscription of "Wishing You A Merry Christmas", invariably accompanied by his main address 'Alain C. White, 51 East 57th Street, New York, U.S.A', or perhaps even his family's summer estate 'Alain C. White, Litchfield, Conn., U.S.A.'

Some of the titles in the series include: *Alpine Chess*, *Tasks and Echoes*, *100 Chess Problems by William Meredith*, *The White Knights*, *The White Rooks*, *Asymmetry*, *Sam Loyd and His Chess Problems*, *Problems By My Friends*, *The Good Companion Two-Mover*, *Valves and Bivalves*, *More White Rooks*, with the final edition being *A Genius of the Two-Mover. A Selection of Problems by Comins Mansfield.* However, for any serious collector, owning a complete set of 'Christmas Series' first editions is something akin to seeking out the holy grail, as two copies are seldom seen on the market: *Retrograde Analysis* and *Robert Braune*.



Alain White (1880-1951) picked up the solving bug early in life and never lost it.

While most in the series sell for roughly £200 and upwards, the notable exception is the two rarities. In June 2014, a copy of *Braune* – Volume 18 of the series; and this one in green cloth with gold lettering – sold at the Klittich-Pfankuch auction house in Germany for around €2,700 (£2,400). An eBay copy in the United States also went for $8,000 (£6,400), and one or two others have rumoured to have changed hands privately for more or less the same price. The reason for it being so expensive is that it is extremely rare: but why is it so rare? And herein comes a clever, though fanciful theory to do with the First World War.

Over the past five years, we've commemorated the centenary anniversary start, and now end of the Great War, and a convenient suggestion that surfaced for its scarcity was the sinking of the Cunard ocean liner RMS Lusitania on May 7th, 1915, which contributed indirectly to the entry of the United States into the conflict. Some had speculated that the doomed ship, which was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-Boat, 11 miles west of Ireland, was

carrying 500 copies of – to give it its full moniker – *Robert Braune, Apôtre de la Symétrie by Alain C. White* and published in 1913 by Librairie De La Stratégie, Paris.

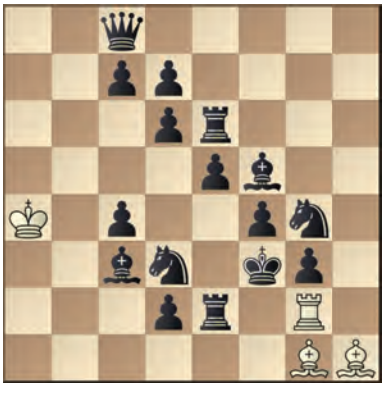
This came – somewhat conveniently, some would perhaps say – on the 2015 centenary-year anniversary of the Lusitania's sinking. But this theory was soon debunked, as apart from the fact that one member of the British Chess Problem Society highlighted that the total print run would only have been around 300, another, the ever-observant and invariably spot-on Michael Clapham, pointed out that the Lusitania was, in fact, travelling from New York to London. As such, quite why so many copies of this edition would have been onboard, which was presumably printed in France, and intended for sending out over the Christmas period of 1913, would have been very baffling, to say the least.

So the reasons for the scarcity of the elusive *Braune* continues to this day to remain a big mystery.

Like many loyal readers of this magazine over the years, my first introduction to Alain C. White came through another festive tradition in these pages, as part of Hugh Courtney's simply unforgettable series of Christmas Quizzes. As a kid fascinated with chess through the early 1970s, solving those quizzes became as much a part of my Christmases as the *Blue Peter* dream team of John Noakes, Peter Purves, Valerie Singleton and Lesley Judd lighting the fourth candle of their wire coat-hanger and tinsel advent crown, not to mention also sitting with the family around the box to watch *Top of the Pops*, *Morecambe & Wise*, and, yes, even, *White Christmas*, with Bing teaming up with Danny Kaye in that bonafide holiday classic. Ah, halcyon days!

Hugh is rightly revered and often referred to as the 'Ghost of Christmas Past' in the pages of this magazine by many readers and fans, with everyone having a particular favourite from his quizzes. For me, Hugh's mention of Alain C. White's name with any of his compositions always came with an added thrill, so here are two of my particular favourites that I vividly remember first seeing, and subsequently being fascinated by.

'Flights of Fancy' became an instant big favourite of White's many fans when it was first published in his Christmas Series of 1919. The idea is simple, and the clue to mating in 12 moves for White being in the title...

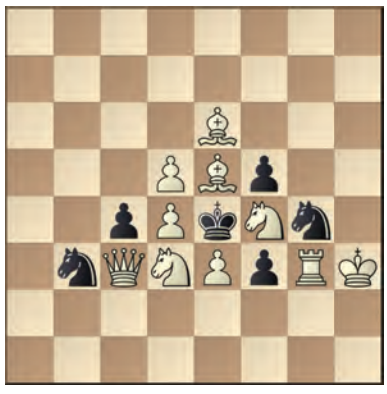


Alain White used his wealth to produce his 'Christmas Series', published between 1905 and 1936, which are now much sought-after collector's items fetching upwards of £200 per title.

The step-by-step solution being:
1 ♖f2+ ♔e3 2 ♖f3+ ♔e4 3 ♖e3+ ♔d4 4 ♖e4+ ♔d5 5 ♖d4+ ♔c5 6 ♖d5+ ♔c6 7 ♖c5+ ♔b6 8 ♖c6+ ♔b7 9 ♖b6+ ♔a7 10 ♖b7+ ♔a8 11 ♖a7+ ♔b8 12 ♖a8 checkmate.

The next, from White's Christmas Series of 1906, is the nearest our man ever got to a Christmas tree problem, and was conceived by the composer when he was "under the shadow of the Great Pyramid", while temporarily resident in Egypt. When it was first published in the *Norwich Mercury*, it was described by the newspaper's chess editor, John Keeble, thus: "It is the best symmetrical design problem we have seen for a very long time, and surpasses all previous attempts at a picture of the pyramid, inasmuch as it shows the old black king (Kheops) in his tomb at the very centre of it."

It is White to play and mate in two, and in submitting it for publication, White included a good-humoured acknowledgment as a clue that the four knights were somewhat anomalous, "...as the Arabian horses stick to the cultivated parts of Egypt, and only the camels get out into the desert."



And the solution? Well, the first move is the unlikely key: 1 ♔h4 f2 2 ♕xb3 cxb3 3 ♘c5 checkmate.

And as we started with Bing, I feel it is only fitting we should end as perhaps Bing would have, if he were also a chess player...

"And may all your Christmases be White"!

The Trends in Chess Openings

The top twenty openings as played by International Masters and Grandmasters in November

1	=	Reti Opening	*136 games*
2	=	Caro-Kann Defence	*97 games*
3	⇧	King's Indian Defence	*83 games*
4	⇩	1 d4 ♘f6 sidelines	*78 games*
5	⇧	Slav Defence	*72 games*
6	⇧	Queen's Gambit Declined	*64 games*
7	⇧	Ruy Lopez, Berlin	*63 games*
8	⇧	English, 1...e5	*56 games*
9	⇧	Nimzo-Indian Defence	*52 games*
10	⇩	Sicilian, Najdorf	*50 games*
11	⇧	Petroff, 3 Nxe5	*45 games*
12	⇩	Catalan Opening	*45 games*
13	⇩	English, 1...c5	*40 games*
14	⇧	1 d4 d5 sidelines	*40 games*
15	⇧	English, 1...e6	*38 games*
16	=	Sicilian, 2 ♘f3 sidelines	*34 games*
17	⇧	Giuoco Piano	*34 games*
18	⇧	Queen's Indian Defence	*34 games*
19	⇧	French, Tarrasch	*30 games*
20	⇩	English, 1...♘f6	*29 games*

1,919 games played between 1-30 November where both players were rated over 2400 Elo

Source: TWIC. Compiled by *HIARCS 14.*

In association with *HIARCS Chess Explorer* - hiarcs.com and *The Week in Chess* -- theweekinchess.com

Another Christmas Carol

A new ghost story of Christmas, by James Essinger

It was just after three o'clock, a raw, cold, misty afternoon in London, on Tuesday December the nineteenth, 1843.

Clutching the little red book of which he was so proud, England's most famous writer walked quickly around Manchester Square towards Dorset Street. To be precise, towards number one, Dorset Street.

He knew he could have spent time at his club that afternoon, with some of his numerous friends from London society and the literary world, people who would all have been delighted to see the 'Inimitable', as Dickens liked to refer to himself. But, for some reason he could not entirely understand, he felt impelled that afternoon to visit a man who, while not one of his closest friends, certainly was more than a casual acquaintance.

The man was Charles Babbage, the inventor of the Difference Engine and the Analytical Engine, both of which were still mere ideas expressed in notes that Babbage had, Dickens knew, been laboriously working on for many years.

The author reached the front door of Babbage's house on the corner of Dorset Street, that L-shaped thoroughfare that leads down to Manchester Square along the long line of the 'L'. Dickens rapped three times on the lion's head door knocker with the confidence of a writer who knows he has that day published something worthwhile.

A few moments later the door was opened by someone whom Dickens recognised instantly.

"My dear Lady Lovelace!" Dickens exclaimed, looking intently at a lady who wore a long ornate dark blue woollen dress and whose light-brown hair was set in an elaborate, charming headdress, with pearls and diamonds artfully placed within it. He knew she was twenty-seven years old, and the sole legitimate daughter of that brilliant but wicked poet Lord Byron, whose poetry Dickens generally greatly admired.

"Mr Dickens! What a very lovely surprise! Charles's servants Mr. and Mrs. Baker have two days leave and have gone overnight to stay with their son and his family in Windsor. I am here alone with Charles. How are you? Please come in out of the cold."

Ada stood back to admit the novelist. Dickens stepped quickly into the hallway, wiped his boots several times on the hessian mat, then closed the door behind him.

Having taken Dickens's coat and hung it up on one of five stern-looking black iron coat-hanger hooks in the hallway, Ada showed Dickens into the drawing room. There the Analytical Mechanic himself (as Dickens liked privately to refer to Babbage) was standing

PORTION OF BABBAGE'S DIFFERENCE ENGINE.

with his back to a well-stocked and extremely warm coal-fire.

"Dickens, good afternoon!" Babbage exclaimed. "Come and stand by the fire, and warm yourself, man!"

And the Mechanic moved sideways to make space for Dickens.

"As you see, Charles," Ada said, addressing Babbage, "We have a most illustrious guest, our dear friend Bozzy. Mr Dickens, you are *most welcome*. I am playing mother this afternoon and have free run of the kitchen. What can I bring for you? A cup of Mr. Harrods' excellent coffee? A nice slice of some of a *lovely pound cake* which Mrs. Baker, appropriately enough, baked yesterday? Or something stronger? Perhaps a glass of Cockburn's port?"

Dickens turned and smiled at Ada. "My dear Lady Lovelace, a glass of port and a slice of pound cake would be most welcome on this chilly, misty afternoon."

He glanced to his right and noticed a table with a chessboard on it and pieces in the midst of a game. Babbage was apparently playing white, for there was a glass of beer on his side of the table whilst on Ada's side there was a glass of white wine.

Dickens gave only a brief nod of recognition when he saw the chessboard. He was aware of knowing how to play chess, just about, but was also conscious of having never devoted more than about ten minutes of his life so far to thinking much about the game. Nor could he ever recall having actually played a game against anyone, but a gentleman was expected to know more or less how the pieces moved.

"My dear Babbage, I'm so sorry to disturb you and Lady Lovelace in the middle of your chessical tussle."

"Oh, I'm sure Charles is *delighted* you've disturbed us, Mr. Dickens," Ada said, with the verbal emphasis Dickens had so often heard when she spoke. "Charles's position on the board is not especially pleasant, and so I am certain he is grateful for the interruption."

"I must concede, Ada,' Babbage said, 'You have played even better today than usual. Perhaps I've been distracted by my recent new plans for designing the printing mechanism for the Analytical Engine."

"Well, Charles," Ada said, "If you want to use that *excuse*, don't let me stop you." She turned to Dickens. "Charles and I often play chess together. It's a pastime that allows us to relax our minds from our regular conversations about *mechanical computation*. The world of the chessboard is... How shall I put this?... Altogether more *innocent* than that of the real world, and, while not any more simple, is certainly less prone to the agonising frustrations Charles and I suffer in trying to win funding from the British government for his remarkable inventions."

Dickens nodded. "Yes, I know of the troubles you have both had in that respect, and I greatly sympathise with you both. On a quite different matter, Lady Lovelace, may I say that I am not aware of having ever met any other woman who plays chess at all, yet alone is capable of gaining a winning position against our mutual friend here?"

Dickens filed away in an instant that phrase, 'our mutual friend', as a possible title for a novel one day.

"You are very kind, Mr. Dickens," Ada said, "Although I suspect you are being a most adroit flatterer."

"No, Lady Lovelace, I am in earnest," Dickens replied. He glanced at Babbage, then at Ada and at Babbage again. "As for me, well, today I have published a new work. It is a thin book by my usual standards of undisciplined prolixity, but I hope it may find a readership."

Ada clapped her hands together excitedly. "Do you mean your new Christmas story? I've heard you were writing one, but I don't know anything about the title or what the story is."

"It's called *A Christmas Carol*," Dickens said. "I wonder, Babbage, whether you and Lady Lovelace might be willing to hear a little of it?"

Babbage gave a gruff nod. "Yes, well, why not, Dickens?" Babbage cleared his throat briefly. "As for the game of chess, Ada and I can resume it later, if Ada wishes, or perhaps we can begin another game, which would, I must confess, be my preference."

Dickens noticed Ada give Babbage a glance of affectionate disapproval, but she said nothing.

Ada bid her two friends sit down at the only other table in the drawing-room; not the one with the chessboard on it, but a more spacious and commodious tea-table made of polished walnut wood. Once Dickens and Babbage were seated, Ada repaired to the kitchen. Dickens remained silent while she was away and so did Babbage. Dickens had noticed on many occasions that Babbage did not, to put the matter mildly, excel at what was known as 'small talk', and Dickens felt no desire to initiate any.

A few minutes later Ada came back into the room with three well-filled glasses of Cockburn's best vintage port, and what Dickens saw at once was a splendid-looking pound cake, a dark brown colour from the molasses and brown sugar, and stuffed with raisins that looked to Dickens as big as grapeshot. An instant later he sprang to his feet, for he saw that Ada was struggling under the weight of the tray; he gently took it from her and set the tray on the tea-table.

Sitting down again, Dickens glanced out of the drawing-room window, which gave on to the silent, darkening street outside. He saw that it had begun to snow, gently, quietly in big billy-flakes tumbling down from the dark sky and settling on the road and pavement.

A stupefied sense of the imminent winter and all the preceding forty-two winters of the nineteenth century, filled his imagination. He thought of the forthcoming winter, with its chill and its snow, and its cold and its hunger, and all the poor of London who not even have homes to go to, but were exposed to the cold, and to that wintry night that was now falling, and would be exposed to all the frozen nights. He knew that this decade was already being called the 'Hungry Forties'.

And with that thought at the front of his mind, he at once started to read his story aloud, to Babbage and Ada.

"*Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a doornail."*

The wintry dusk outside slowly turned into a wintry night, and still the snow kept falling, and Dickens went on reading his story aloud to his two friends.

The only pauses in the reading occurred when, on three occasions, Babbage went to add more coal to the fire from the scuttle, and once when Ada went to fetch more pound cake and port from the kitchen. Dickens had noted on a previous occasion that there was nothing resembling a drinks cabinet in Babbage's drawing-room. Dickens did not pause in his reading when Babbage made up the fire, but he did pause when Ada left the room and only resumed when she returned.

Dickens, finding they did not appeal to him to stop, continued to read the entire story, giving a flawless performance of all the voices so necessary to make his very own Christmas carol come alive: the crabbed, rasping voice of Scrooge; the cheerful, warm, but afflicted voice of Bob Cratchit; the chirpy, optimistic tones of Tiny Tim so desperate for life; the gentle, lilting voice of Christmas Past, whom Dickens saw fit to invest with a woman's voice; and the rumbustious, wholesome, cheery, life-loving of Christmas Present.

Of course, Christmas To Come said nothing, for that ghost spoke of the future.

In this wise Dickens read the entire story to Babbage and Ada. He finished, with the words that had only been published that day, but which Dickens had a secret and fervent hope might one day become immortal – *"He had no further intercourse with spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence principle ever afterwards. It was always said of him that he was a man who knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed that knowledge. May that be truly said of all of us. And so, as Tiny Tim observed, 'God bless us, every one!"*

Dickens fell silent. He glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece which to Dickens's astonishment showed sixteen minutes past eight. He had had no sense of time passing. Outside, the snow was still falling. It had settled several inches thick on the pavement and road, and reflected a wintry whiteness in the light of the gas street-lamp close by Babbage's home.

And then, suddenly, Ada, who was sitting at the table next to them, cleared her throat and started to speak in a voice neither Dickens nor Babbage had ever heard before.

As she did, Dickens was startled to feel that the air in the room, air warmed by the coal-fire, suddenly began to feel intensely cold. He put his hand to his cheeks. They felt surprisingly chilly. He wondered what could be happening. But before Dickens could speak, he saw the most extraordinary silvery-white aura appear around Ada and he could not say a word, so great was his astonishment. Babbage, clearly, had seen it too, for he was staring at Ada with complete bewilderment.

Ada now started to speak. When she did, her voice was not the voice of the woman of twenty-seven who had let Dickens into the house some hours earlier. It was, instead, the voice of a girl, a girl of, Dickens thought, about twelve or thirteen years old. And as the girl-Ada spoke, in a soft, tremulous, low, yet utterly arresting voice, the strange silvery-white aura remained all around her. This is what Dickens and Babbage heard her say:

"We know now the story of the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future, but I am now become... I am now become the Ghost of Christmas of the Distant Future, a future none of us or our children or even our grandchildren shall live to see."

Dickens and Babbage looked at each other briefly in bewildered astonishment, then turned back to Ada.

"It's an unimaginable future, and I am become a girl to tell you all this, for when I was thirteen, and living near the village of Patrixbourne near Canterbury with my mother Lady Byron, who was often away on rest cures, I was mostly by myself in the company of my governess and my beloved cat Puff. I was alone much of the time,

nevertheless. I had many strange imaginings, including that I could perhaps build, following the principles of a bird's flight and a bird's anatomy, a kind of mechanical steam-horse with a steam-engine in it that would fly up to the heavens.

"I see now, as the Ghost of Christmas of the Distant Future that the day shall come, not this century but in the next century, the twentieth century that most likely none of us shall see, when such machines shall indeed exist. They shall not be powered by steam-engines as these do not develop enough power for their weight, but by a new type of engine we can hardly imagine today."

The girl-Ada briefly and daintily cleared her throat, took a correspondingly dainty sip of port (as if that were a natural drink for a thirteen-year-old girl), then continued in her soft, rather deep, intent and absolutely beguiling tone:

"Also, I see that the day shall come when Charles's imaginings of mechanical computation, imaginings I have been privileged to have him share with me, shall have become wondrous machines that operate precisely according to the principles that Charles and I have planned and developed. Though Charles was their inventor, I have sought to show him, with the Poetical Science that is at the core of my being, how the machines he envisages can be far more than mere calculating machines, but can indeed carry out any kind of algebraic or logical process and can govern the operations of any other machine, including a flying-machine."

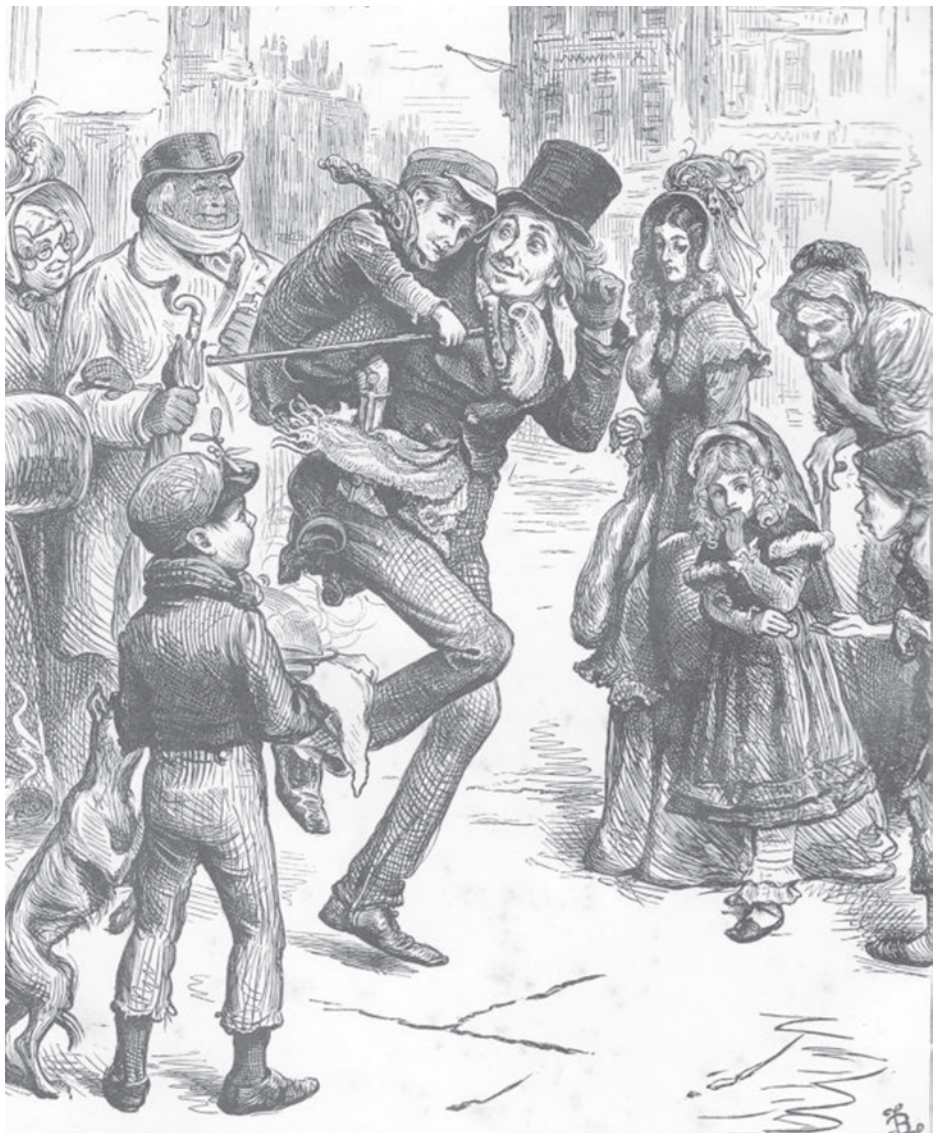
The girl-Ada fell silent momentarily. Dickens did not feel inclined to speak, and evidently nor did Babbage.

"I also see that the day shall come," the girl-Ada said, "When by means of a new science, the science that delves into the very constituent particles of electricity itself, it shall be possible to build automatic calculating machines that do not use cogwheels at all, but which use an infinitely faster science that enables them to carry out a myriad functions in less than the twinkling of an eye. I see a world where these machines aid human beings in every respect and relieve people of much of the tedious mental drudgery that poor Bob Cratchit was visited with when he had to earn a living."

The girl-Ada paused for a moment to catch her breath, then hastily hurried on with: "So I speak of a future more than one and a half centuries beyond this wintry evening, and yet it is a future I see with the greatest clarity!"

The girl-Ada fell silent. She looked down at the polished walnut-table, and put her hands on her knees, and the silvery glow around her faded. Dickens and Babbage looked carefully at her. She was weeping.

Babbage at once got up from his chair. Dickens watched Babbage put his rather large, strong-looking right arm with its correspondingly large hand, around her smallish frame. "My dear Ada," Babbage said quietly, "What on earth happened just now? How did you assume that voice of your younger self... And how did you imagine such extraordinary predictions?"



Ada wiped her eyes using a pocket handkerchief she drew out from the folds of her dark blue dress. "What do you mean, Charles?" she asked, in the twenty-seven-year-old voice that was so familiar to Dickens and Babbage. "I really don't know what you are talking about."

"Are you saying, Ada," Babbage asked, with his right arm still around her, "That you don't remember what you just said?"

Ada shook her head briefly. "I don't remember anything, Charles. I was enjoying the end of Mr. Dickens's story and then suddenly I felt rather faint and the next thing I knew, I began to cry."

Dickens nodded slowly. He glanced first at Babbage and then at Ada. "My dear friends," he said softly, "I really do think that none of us should ever speak of this evening to anybody else. Babbage, perhaps at your leisure you might remind Lady Lovelace of what she said and perhaps even write down what she said so that neither of you will forget it. Or perhaps I shall write down as much as I can remember when I get home and send it to you both in a private letter addressed to you. You both have my absolute word that I shall not, under any circumstances whatsoever, publish anything I write about this evening, though I shall at some juncture bring it to you here, Babbage. I mean bring it personally, rather than entrust it to any servant or messenger."

Babbage and Ada nodded slowly, but said nothing. Dickens, suddenly feeling that it was time for him to go and leave these two friends to discuss whatever they would want to discuss after he'd gone, finished what was left of the port in his second glass – or perhaps it was his third, he couldn't quite remember – and got to his feet.

Babbage and Ada stood up too, simultaneously. Dickens shook hands warmly with them both, Babbage first and then Ada, placed the gift copy of *A Christmas Carol* on the walnut-wood table and bid them farewell.

"Pray do not concern yourself with me, Lady Lovelace," Dickens said. "I shall fetch my coat and let myself out. I know there is a cab-stand close by. Again, my friends, let us please speak of this to nobody else, ever."

"Dickens, I heartily agree," Babbage said.

Ada did not say anything, but merely gave a speechless nod.

That same evening Dickens did indeed write a full recollection of what the girl-Ada had said, and copied his recollection out and made a copy for himself. Then, five days later, on Sunday, December the twenty-fourth – on Christmas Eve, of all the good days in the year – Dickens visited Babbage to wish him the merriest of Christmases and solemnly handed the dozen pages of the recollection to Babbage in a thick envelope. Ada was not

there at the time.

Dickens never asked Babbage whether he had shown the papers to Ada, nor did Dickens ever ask Ada whether she had seen them. To the end of their lives, the three friends kept to their promise not to mention what had happened to any other living soul, and they never did.

As for the game of chess, when Dickens made that visit to Babbage on Christmas Eve, and after the two friends had toasted Christmas over a large bowl of smoking bishop which Mrs. Baker had prepared, Dickens ventured to ask his friend what had happened when he and Ada had resumed their game of chess.

"My dear Dickens, Ada beat me fair and square, and I am not ashamed to admit it. I was perhaps not in the best frame of mind for concentrating after what the Ghost of Christmas of the Distant Future had said, but I must not make excuses. Ada teasingly let me queen my remaining pawn, but only because she could then use her rook to check me and, when perforce I had to move my king to avoid the check, she took my nascent queen off the board with her rook, whereupon I instantly knocked my king over and resigned."

Dickens did not really understand the 'chessical' technicalities of what Babbage had just told him, but he certainly did grasp the gist of what had happened in their game.

"I wonder, Babbage," Dickens said, quietly, "If Lady Lovelace may prove to have been as adept at foretelling the future as she is at playing chess?"

Babbage nodded slowly. He dipped his pewter tumbler in the bowl of smoking and steaming bishop, filled the tumbler almost to the brim, sipped some of the hot fragrant orange and cinnamon-scented liquid, set the tumbler upon a cork coaster on the walnut-wood table between them, then looked intently at the great novelist.

"Yes, Dickens," Babbage murmured, "I have often wondered exactly the same thing."

James Essinger is the author of Ada's Algorithm *(2013), a biography of Ada Lovelace, and of* Charles and Ada: the true story of the friendship between computer pioneers Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace*, to be published by The History Press in 2019. He is also the author, with Mo Pietroni-Spenst, of the libretto and lyrics for* Ada Lovelace: the musical.

James is most grateful to Margaret Dowley MBE for her excellent help with transcribing the Dictaphone tapes he used when writing this story.

Readers' Letters

From Munich!

Following my article 'Memories of Krakow' in the November *CHESS*, I wondered if readers, especially those who remember the Sutton Coldfield days of this magazine, might wish to know a little more about what happened to me.

In 1977, after giving up serious chess for a few years, I moved to Munich, to a new job (programming), 'for a couple of years' (I am still here). At once, after 10 years of marriage, my wife, Jana, became pregnant. There were problems, but baby Stephie was born by caesarean. Then, without ever seeing her, Jana fell into a coma and died.

Stephie's retired Czech grandparents were a great help to me, and sister Peggy came to help too. For three years, Stephie and I shuttled between Prague and Munich. In this time, I also visited Meran to help my father (who had glaucoma), at the 1981 world championship match.

Attempts to move back to England, with a new job, new house, etc, failed miserably, but I successfully courted my current wife, Zuzana, Jana's cousin. We had no common language, but we are now fluent in German and English. Caroline was born, and Zuzana was a fine mother to her and Stephie.

Stephie discovered at grammar school that the father of a friend ran a chess club at his firm. So I joined the club and played some league and cup games. When this club closed, I moved to a stronger Munich club called Tarrasch. After two promotions, this club then played in the Bavarian first division. Umansky, ex-world correspondence champion played for us, and later even Wolfgang Unzicker.

Tarrasch's club president helped me with chess software and told me where to find a database of recent games of strong Bavarians. I did well on board four or five in an eight-man team. One opposing player asked how I came to play so well without an ELO rating, which was, of course, due to my 20-year chess pause. I soon had an ELO rating well above 2300, which I believe made me the highest-graded active British player of my age.

After two years in this league, my narrow opening repertoire made things tougher, as my games came into the databases. After three seasons, I had played 22 rated games, and probably needed one point from my next two games to qualify as FM. I lost one playing terribly, but won the next, so I got the title at an unusually advanced age.

After this my results deteriorated, though I obtained my only classical grandmaster scalp. The next club president angered me, so I moved to 'Munich South East' who meet in Hohenbrunn, a five-minute cycle ride from my house. Two Serbian Grandmasters play for us. Another Serb and a Russian-Israeli Rabbi add to the international flavour of the team.

At present, I am playing no serious chess, while recovering from heart and prostate surgery.

Chris Wood, Munich

Modern Chess & Hull

I was very interested by several articles in the October issue of your consistently excellent magazine, and would like to comment briefly. Firstly, in his article 'Modern Chess', Milos Pavlovic (whose excellent book *Unknown Weapons in the Grünfeld* I recently read) talked about how computers have affected preparation. However, he omitted to mention some very important things.

The two most common objections I hear to the use of computers for chess preparation are: (i.) the world champion will be the one who has the best chess computer (it would be interesting to know Magnus' views on that!); and (ii.) once computers solve chess, nobody will want to play any more.

Both of these objections are false, for the following reasons. Firstly, it doesn't matter how good your computer is, you have to memorise what's on it, and bring that to the board. And the human brain simply is not capable of memorising more than a fraction of a percent of what is on even an average computer. Secondly, high-level chess is not simply a matter of memorisation. It is largely a matter of pattern recognition – recognising familiar themes in unfamiliar positions. One has to know not only what to do, but why – one must always have a plan. It frequently happens that the best move in one position is not the best in an apparently similar one. And no computer can teach that.

I was happy too to see the upbeat article about the British Championships in Hull. When I visited that fine city many years ago, it was known for all the wrong reasons. It had been hit very hard by the recession (please note, this was in the 1990s), and I was told of a housing estate which had some of the worst social and economic problems in Europe. According to the last few lines of Carl Portman's article, things are still tough even now.

But even back then I couldn't help warming to the generous nature of Hull people. They were battling things out no matter what, somehow kept smiling, and showed a lot of the grit that made our country great. Their hospitality is rarely surpassed. From my experience, the materially poorest people are often the most generous, for philosophical and political reasons which I won't comment on. I sincerely hope that the British Chess Championships provided a much-needed boost to that great city and, when Stephen Greep and his team have had a well-earned rest, they might think of doing it again.

Martin Walker, South Korea

Boxed History

Bob Jones presents the unusual story of not one Walter Stephens, but two

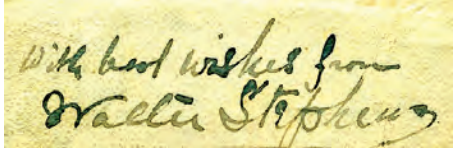
As I've said before, you never quite know what you might find in a box of old chess books. Recently I took delivery of a small box of old magazines from a regular contact, Philip Seery of Lancaster. Included in the collection was a set of four *British Chess Magazines* dated 1926-1929, hardback, but bound in an idiosyncratic way that indicated that they all originated from the same source.

The first to hand was the 1928 issue, which clearly had started life as the twelve individual monthly issues, subsequently bound together by an amateur, with the January cover pasted on to the front and the December cover similarly pasted on to the back. There were also a few newspaper cuttings about chess issues pasted inside, but what caught the attention most was the bold inscription 'Edward Boswell, Lancaster, from W.S.'. So who were these people, and was there any kind of story lurking here?

Lancaster was the first obvious starting point, so I phoned Philip, my vendor, who told me he had purchased the BCMs from Edward Boswell's son in the 1960s. A quick look in *Chess Personalia* revealed that Boswell (1899-1960) had obituaries in the *American Chess Bulletin*, *The Problemist* (English & Dutch versions) and BCM, so he was clearly a noted activist. Of these, I only had the 1960 BCM to refer to, in which his obituarist, D. J. Morgan, had written:

"*Edward Boswell – a fine composer and, in particular, a great expert in the self-mate field, a tester and examiner for several columns at home and abroad, a judge of international standing, such were some of the many-sided activities in the chess problem world of Edward Boswell. So sound and reasonable were his ideas and so mature his judgement that the British Chess Problem Society sought his services more than those of any other member. As a tribute to his great services he was elected in 1958 as the President of the Society, but died during his term of office.*"

So, as regards the books' provenance, in a short time, there were direct links going back nearly 90 years between Edward Boswell, his son, Philip Seery and now me. But from whom did they originate? A closer look at the 1927 volume showed another inscription 'Edward Boswell – Lancaster – With best wishes from Walter Stephens'. So W.S. was, in fact, Walter Stephens, but so what?



It was now another job for Google. Type in 'Walter Stephens chess' and two people of that name pop up. One was a top chess player and official in the U.S.

The American who forfeited Denker

The American (1883-1948) was born in St. Louis, Missouri, obtained a BA and MA from Princeton University and a PhD from Columbia. He was as gifted at sport as academia, especially baseball, and was a charismatic preacher. However, he became best known for his accomplishments in the chess world, becoming one of the most prominent figures in Metropolitan chess circles, and an important figure in the early days of the United States Chess Federation. In addition to organising, financing and competing in many national chess tournaments, he served as an officer for the Manhattan and New Brooklyn Chess Clubs. Yet in spite of all these chess achievements he is best remembered in America as the tournament director who mistakenly forfeited Arnold Denker after Reshevsky's flag had fallen during a game in the 1942 U.S. Championship.

It happened in the sixth round when, in a crucial game, Denker and Reshevsky were involved in a furious finish, the latter being notorious for his blitz-like abilities, and a crowd of 40-50 spectators were hooked. Soon it was claimed that Reshevsky had in fact overstepped the time limit. Stephens, as Tournament Director, was called over to sort it out. He approached the board with the clock facing away from him. He picked it up and turned it around to check the times. The clock, now on Denker's side, had indeed passed the time control, so he defaulted Denker, whereupon Reshevsky immediately got up and walked away.

The crowd were at first incredulous at this faux pas and then incensed as Stephens refused to correct his obvious error. Denker appealed to Reshevsky's sense of fair play, who simply replied "It's not my decision", which tells us something about him as well. The Appeals Committee later upheld the decision, which makes it sound like everyone was in awe of Stephens and possibly a little afraid.

Later, Carl Pilnick recalled that Stephens was "A pompous ass who knew nothing about chess, but had money and liked to run tournaments". Denker said, "Stephens ran the Manhattan Chess Club like it was his family plantation" and that he was a "zealous tumour". The debate continues online to this day with many accusations of Stephens being

L. Walter Stephens financed and ran many an American tournament, but wasn't always right.

autocratic, inflexible, always believing himself to be in the right, even when he obviously isn't. Is he our man? Probably not, but we'll keep this story in mind anyway.

Tracing the other Walter Stephens

The English Walter Stephens arises from references in the Streatham & Brixton Chess Club Blog, which ended in March 2016. Back in March 2011 a sequence of articles was started after one of the members saw the chess-based painting by Richard Dadd (1817-1886), entitled 'The Child's Problem' in an exhibition of watercolours. It portrays a child, looking at a chessboard with a scattering of pieces, and an elderly man asleep nearby. The blogger, Martin Smith, goes into some of the many interpretations of the objects in the picture, but the main background facts relate to the painter himself.

Dadd was a naturally gifted artist who was made a member of the Royal Academy at the age of 20. In 1842 he was taken as an artist on an expedition through the Middle East, but while travelling up the Nile became delusional, believing he'd been possessed by the spirit of Osiris, the Ancient Egyptians' God of death and the afterlife. On return, he believed his father to be the Devil and killed him. He was then

committed for life to the Bethlem Psychiatric Hospital (Bedlam), and then the newly-opened Broadmoor in 1863. Here he was treated by sympathetic doctors who encouraged him to continue with his art as a way of minimising the effects of his mental disorder.

We can be sure that everything in the picture itself relates to the title. Does the child's problem consist of the pieces on the chessboard, or is the old man a ghostly representation of the father he killed, or is slavery the problem, as represented by the hanging picture – the whole Dadd family were known to be abolitionists. And the other items in the picture are probably symbolic in some way.

In a series of posts the Streatham blog goes on to trace the theme of chess as an activity in Broadmoor that could have therapeutic effects on some of its patients and was therefore generally encouraged by the authorities. There was an in-house magazine called the *Broadmoor Chronicle*, which from time to time carried a chess column and sometimes even a problem. In the January 1976 issue a short chess column appeared which contained a 2-mover, but also mentioned that back in the 1920s there had been a proper problemist in the ranks, who had had problems published in *The Daily Telegraph*. Name of Walter Stephens, would you believe.

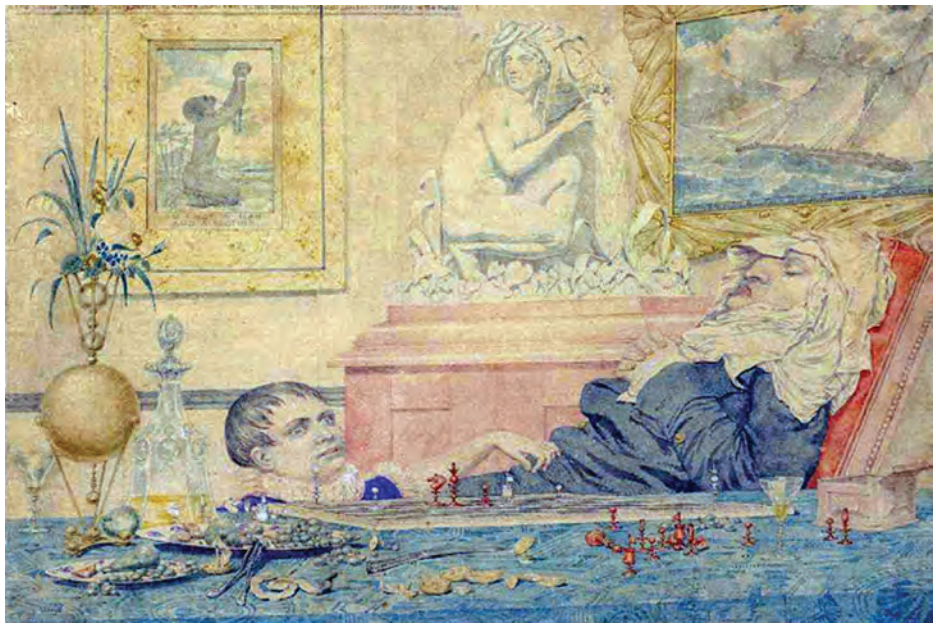
So who was this second Walter Stephens? Was he the Governor, a warder, inmate or what?

Walter Stephens, Broadmoor inmate

Probing deeper, Martin Smith and his fellow bloggers located online the written records of a murder trial in 1905, which made grim reading. A certain Walter Stephens was living at 45, Honeybrook Road, Clapham, with his wife, Edith, when one day he went to a gun-shop with the intention of purchasing a handgun. On being told he needed a licence, he promptly went to the post office next door and got one in the name of Cyril A. Desparde, returned to the shop and bought a pistol with five chambers and a box of 50 bullets for £2.

Later that evening, when Edith was returning home, he stood outside his house and promptly shot her five times. She staggered into a neighbour's house for help while he waited on the spot and when a policeman arrived, Stephens said, "Yes, I done it. I give myself up" and made no trouble as he was carted off to Balham police station. During initial interviews he wished to be known as Cyril Desparde, though there was no basis in it at all.

At the subsequent trial various witness statements painted a picture of the Stephens' life together. They appeared to have been on very good terms with each other. Yet he often appeared sated with drink, though never rolling drunk. In fact, several times he'd been diagnosed with delirium tremens, the DTs, and in 1895 had been incarcerated in a Jersey asylum, and later one in Camberwell. A police surgeon, giving evidence explained how Stephens had told him about his past life and how his troubles had all started when he was in America. Another witness thought he seemed "considerably superior to the position he was occupying".



'The Child's Problem' by Richard Dadd, who became one of the first inmates at Broadmoor.

He was found guilty but insane, and was committed to life in Broadmoor. In his new alcohol-free existence his brained slowly cleared and he took to chess as one of his hobbies, which, as in Dadd's case, the staff would encourage. He composed problems which he sent to various outlets, including the *Lancaster Gazette*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Chess Amateur*, etc.

The Streatham bloggers located a story recounted in the in-house newspaper, the *Broadmoor Chronicle* in 1967. It said that two of Walter Stephens' chess problems had been published in *The Daily Telegraph* of July 1st 1922 together with his covering letter, which read thus: "There has been so much piffle written about Broadmoor in the papers of late that perhaps you would like to be able to say something true about it, so I enclose a couple of my problems as a sample of the work done here".

The bloggers checked this out in the British Library and found a copy of the *Telegraph* for that date, and indeed there it all was – the "So much piffle" letter and two problems. Furthermore, the *Broadmoor Chronicle* went on to say, "It is interesting to note that not only did Walter Stephens continue to set problems for the *Daily Telegraph*, but he was a regular contributor to the *Manchester City News*, *The Observer*, *The Daily News* and *The Referee*."

At this point, in December 2011, the website came to the end of this particular sequence of stories, leaving readers with this mystery: How could chessplayers in this enclosed, locked-away world in 1967, have known about Walters Stephens' activities over 40 years earlier, as there is no reference to it in his prison files? The website closed down altogether in March 2016, though its many posts are still accessible. Everything so far about the English Walter Stephens is down to Martin Smith's fascinating researches.

Back to the box of BCMs

And then this box of magazines arrived on my doorstep, which enabled me to take up the story and run with it. It seemed incredible that after all that had gone before, I now owned four of Walter Stephens' own magazines, containing his handwritten comments and other material. It would be easy to get the idea that, free of the demon drink, Stephens settled down and found a way of using his brain and communicating with the outside world through his problems, and all was sweetness and light ever after. However, his *BCM*s tell a different story.

Although problem creation is usually a solitary activity, there are several different roles involved. The composer and solver, of course, but also the column Editor, and his aides, the Tester and Examiner. The recipient of a new problem for possible publication by an unknown composer, needs to be sure that the problem is indeed new, and not just copied out of a book.

If, for example, the sender was named Comins Mansfield, who enclosed a covering letter explaining how the problem worked, then no worries. But if it was from Joe Bloggs, residing at Broadmoor Psychiatric Hospital, the Editor might feel a little more caution advisable, and he would then send it to a Tester who would have decades of experience in the art and history of composition; people such as Edward Boswell, Cyril Kipping and George Hume, all of whom were involved here.

The key BCM volume is 1926, into which Stephens had pasted a number of problems, bits of magazine articles and analyses by an unknown hand. First of all, on the front endpaper is the start of a letter from George Hume, which reads: "As far back as 1893 Maximow composed the enclosed position and if you turn it upside down and compare, you will see..." The rest has been torn out, but the implication is that Hume has spotted a similarity between one that has just been

sent to him (presumably Stephens'), and one by the Russian Nikolay Maximov (1875-1921) and is trying to explain it.

Pasted on to the back endpaper is a cutting from *The Chess Amateur* dated April 1927.

Curious Anticipation

"With the number of problems turned out nowadays it is not to be wondered at that there are a large a large number of cases of unconscious anticipation. A composer may either never have seen the anticipation, or else he forgets all about it, and his subconscious self composes it without any idea of conscious memory. The following example, sent by Mr. Stephens, is rather curious, however, since the two problems were published in the same column at an interval of only four months. The problem editor and the second composer, we are told by Mr. Stephens, seemed quite ignorant of the striking resemblance."

W. Stephens
Lancaster Guardian
25.09.1926

2 moves – Sh5!

L.C. Hallam
Lancaster Guardian
15.01.1927

2 moves – Qc5!

"After the key-moves the positions are almost identical."

The writer, Cyril Kipping, is not accusing anyone of deliberate sharp practice, so what's going on here? Has Stephens been rumbled? How did he respond? Underneath the pasted article Stephens has written: "A deliberate lie by Kipping who would appear to be the ignorant one! Whineray knew the position sent him by Hallam to be a mere plagiarism, having been warned not to publish by his tester. Was Hallam's diagram intended for the *Falkirk Herald* O.E.? Was it by accident placed in the wrong envelope?" Clearly there was no way Stephens was going to be found in the wrong – it must be someone else's fault.

So seriously was the case taken that the positions, were sent to America for expert analysis and an impartial judgment, together with the Editor's (Boswell's) original introduction: "This week's problems are by two Berkshire contributors, one of whom makes his first appearance in our column." The 'one' presumably being Hallam.

It went to Dr. F.W. Risser of Strasburg, Illinois, who returned six pages of observations, all pasted into Stephens' BCM. He said that compared to the original Maximov position, "All the men were moved down one rank and the board then given a half turn. Since there are no pawns on the board and all the play is central, this change makes practically no change in the solution, but does make comparison with the other diagrams and solutions much easier [...] and there is no appreciable difference between the two". This may have been the essence of what Hume's earlier letter had said, had it been left complete.

It's hard not to conclude that Stephens had been caught red-handed. The kindest interpretation is that he was trying to help a fellow patient get his name in the paper. Or maybe he *was* L.C. Hallam. After all, he was not averse to adopting odd names from time to time.

So, in conclusion, we have two men with several things in common – the same name, same pigheaded refusal to be seen to be in the wrong, same strong connection to the chess world, and a sometime residence in America. Is that it? What was the nature of the trouble Walter Stephens confessed to having had while in America? We know that by 1885 he was back in the UK and getting married to Ethel, but could he have been in America about the time the other Walter Stephens was born?

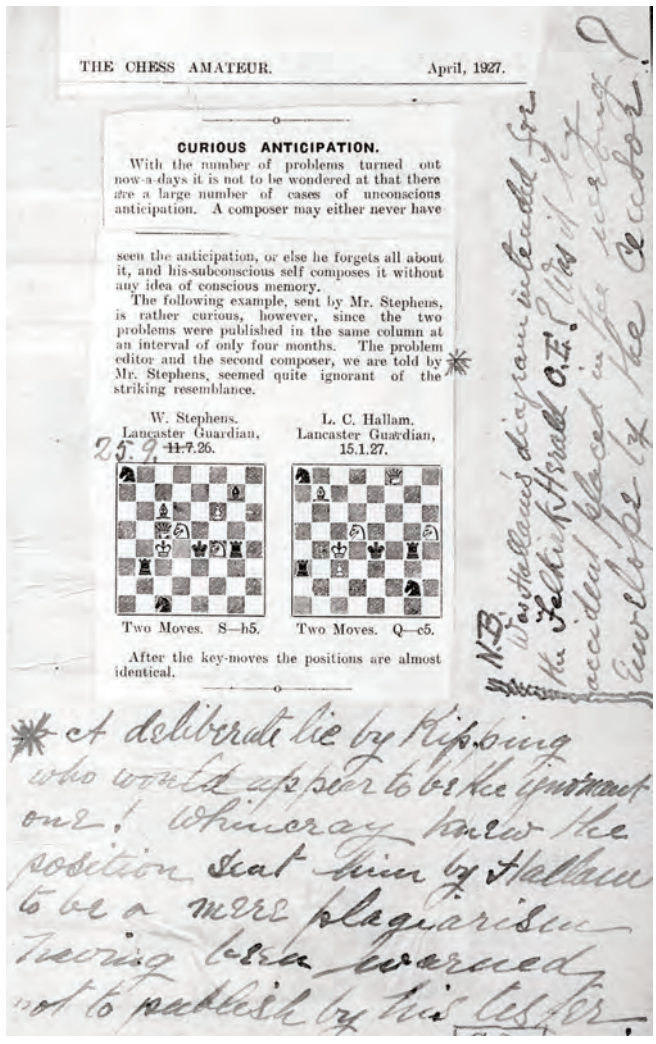
St. Louis, Missouri may be a clue. The city was well-known as the assembly point for European immigrant adventurers as they prepared to follow the trails or railroads to the Californian goldfields. Was Stephens there around 1880, following some big, get-rich-quick dreams?

At the time of the murder in 1905 he was 47, so therefore was born in 1858, and would have been 22 in 1880, old enough and intelligent enough to organise for himself a pioneering trip to the West Coast, where by that time gold to the value of trillions of dollars had been discovered simply by hydraulic methods. If that was his plan, something went awry, he panicked and, psychologically damaged, returned to England.

So were the two Walters related in some way? Father and son, maybe?

Surely not – that's just too fanciful. It's about as far-fetched as me receiving a murdering psychopath's chess magazines in an old cardboard box used for chip fat containers.

Ridiculous idea...isn't it?



THE CHESS AMATEUR. April, 1927.

CURIOUS ANTICIPATION.

With the number of problems turned out now-a-days it is not to be wondered at that there are a large number of cases of unconscious anticipation. A composer may either never have seen the anticipation, or else he forgets all about it, and his subconscious self composes it without any idea of conscious memory.

The following example, sent by Mr. Stephens, is rather curious, however, since the two problems were published in the same column at an interval of only four months. The problem editor and the second composer, we are told by Mr. Stephens, seemed quite ignorant of the striking resemblance.

W. Stephens. Lancaster Guardian, ~~11.7.26.~~ 25.9.26.

Two Moves. S—h5.

L. C. Hallam. Lancaster Guardian, 15.1.27.

Two Moves. Q—c5.

After the key-moves the positions are almost identical.

* A deliberate lie by Kipping who would appear to be the ignorant one! Whineray knew the position sent him by Hallam to be a mere plagiarism having been warned not to publish by his tester.

Christmas Chess Quiz

Overdosed on the mince pies and sherry? Then detox with our festive-themed quiz, full of all sorts of chess challenges, and brought to you by Charles Higgie and Matt Read

Last year we started the Christmas Quiz with a set of questions about chess players. This year we are starting with a set of questions about chess openings, the first with, naturally, a Christmas theme.

1) The composer of the song 'White Christmas' will lead you to this defence.

2) Which opening is an anagram of 'tier'?

3) Which opening variation takes its name from two monsters?

4) In 1961 Bobby Fischer claimed that 3....d6 was a refutation of which opening?

5) 'The Fried Liver Attack' is perhaps the only opening named after a food. It is a variation of which opening?

6) Which world champion lends his name to a Defence to the Queen's Gambit?

7) 'The Monkey's Bum' is a variation of which opening?

8) Which country produced 7 world champions, but hasn't got an opening named after it?

9) This defence is named after a city which is situated on a river. The settlement on one side of the river gives the first part of the city's name, the settlement on the other side gives you the second part of the city's name.

10) Which nationality lends its name to the most number of chess openings?

11) Many openings are named after countries, towns and cities, but can you name a defence named after a group of peoples living across many different countries?

12) In Bobby Fischer's 'Game of the Century' the game transposed into which opening?

13) The word 'gambit' comes from a word meaning 'to trip' – in which language?

14) Smyslov, Breyer, Chigorin, Steinitz, Bird and Schliemann all have a variation named after them – in which opening?

15) This opening could connect courage with double?

16) This opening could connect letters to kissing?

17) Which opening shares its name with an Ultravox hit?

18) Which chess opening is a Hebrew term meaning 'son of my sorrow'?

19) Which attack was famously used as a prepared variation against the then world champion José Raúl Capablanca in 1918?

20) Which opening variation was simultaneously played by Argentine players Panno, Pilnik and Najdorf who were facing the Soviet Grandmasters Geller, Spassky and Keres in a 1955 Interzonal?

Anagrams of Players' Names

Famously, 'It's Only Me' is an anagram of Tony Miles and was used for the name of the book containing writings by him and about him brought out after his death.

Can you find the players hidden in these anagrams?

21) On the girls

22) Shy and vain

23) Resignation trap

24) Banner lets

25) Uncle grass man

26) Slow Eyes

27) Hair I Sing

28) Thonged person

29) Alarming pic

30) Camel Limp No

It happened in 2018

31) 2018 was an Olympiad year. Which country cleaned up, winning not only gold medals in the Open and Women's section, but also gold medals for their board ones' performances?

32) 2018 saw a new women's world champion. What's her name?

33) Alongside the Olympiad in Batumi, FIDE held an election to determine its new President. Who emerged victorious?

34) Name the nine-year-old chess prodigy who has been saved from deportation following a protracted immigration battle.

35) Magnus Carlsen retained his world no.1 spot in 2018, a position he has held on every FIDE rating list since July 2011. Who was the the previous world no.1?

36) This year's British Chess Championship saw some familiar names engraved on the trophies. The Open winner is now a six-time champion and the Women's Champion is now an eight-time winner. Name both.

37) Radoslaw Wojtaszek and Alina Kashlinskaya carried off both the major prizes at the Chess.com Isle of Man tournament. What else links the winners?

38) Javokhir Sindarov became a grandmaster in October at the tender age of 12 years, 10 months and 5 days, which makes him the second youngest ever. Who is the youngest?

39) Which country hosted the Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz this November, marking the country's first-ever Super-GM tournament?

40) Which other tournament do Tata Steel sponsor and will do so again in 2019?

The Positions!

We hope you will forgive us if we begin with a couple from Charles' recent games? (At least that way they are fairly easy!)

41)

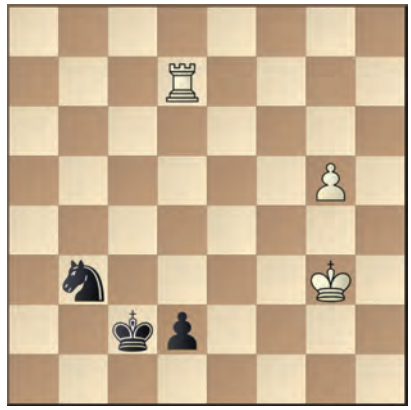
White to play and win

42) Can Black safely take the e-pawn?

Black to play

43) The third and final position from Charles' games, and this was a very lucky escape for him. He was very pleased with himself for playing ...♘a1-b3 last move rather than the obvious ...d2-d1♕ which loses very easily.

At the time he thought ...♘a1-b3 drew, but was interested to find out from an endgame database that White actually had a winning move, that was not played. So, what was the winning move that White missed?



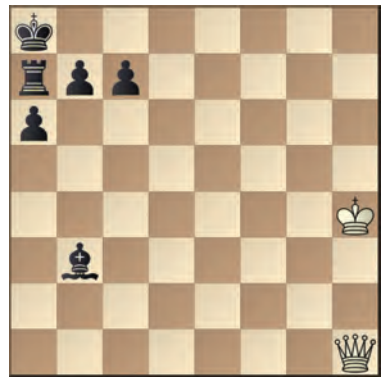
White to play and win

44) The position at the top of the next column is Black to play and win. And, for a bonus point, this position has a link to a song by *The Beatles*. What is the link?

Black to play and win

We haven't got three wise men for you – but we have got three interesting endgame positions:

45)



White to play and win

Forthcoming Events

Dec 28-30 **London Christmas Congress**
www.ljcc.co.uk

Dec 28 - Jan 6 **Hastings International Congress**
www.hastingschess.com or call 01424 443300

January 4-6 **Shropshire Congress, Telford**
www.shropshirechesscongress.org.uk

January 4-6 **South Wales Winter Congress, Bridgend**
www.welshchessunion.uk or call 01443 772750

January 5 **Golders Green Rapidplay**
goldersgreenchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

January 6 **Hull Rapidplay**
www.hullchess.com/rapidplay2019 or call 07481 696111

January 12-13 **4NCL: Daventry, Bedford & Doncaster**
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

January 13 **Lothians Allegro, Edinburgh**
www.chessscotland.com/events/ or call 0131 334 1062

January 12-13 **Somerset New Year Congress, Clevedon**
somersetchesscongress.webs.com or call 01209 217210

January 18-20 **4NCL Congress, Harrogate**
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

January 18-20 **Fareham Congress**
www.castlechess.co.uk or call 01707 661160

January 19-20 **Hampstead U2200 Congress**
hampsteadchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

January 19-20 **Hassocks Congress**
www.sussexchess.co.uk

January 19-20 **Kirkcaldy Congress**
www.champchess.com or call 07411 196422

January 19-20 **Williamson Shield, Belfast**
www.ulsterchess.org or call 07872 544868

January 20 **Nottingham Rapidplay**
nottschess.org or call 0115 945 5908

January 25-27 **Simon Bartlett Memorial, Torquay**
www.budechess.co.uk or call 07771 544721

January 27 **Stockport Rapidplay**
www.stockportchessclub.org/rapidplay.html

And for the Online Connoisseur:

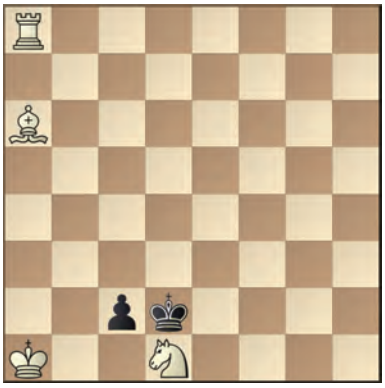
January 11-27 **Wijk aan Zee**
www.tatasteelchess.com; Carlsen, Duda, Giri, Kramnik, etc.

January 21-31 **Gibraltar Masters**
www.gibchess.com; Adams, Aronian, Jones, Nakamura, etc.

Congress organisers – Don't forget to email editor@chess.co.uk to ensure your event is listed, or if you really want to guarantee a good entry, contact Matt@chess.co.uk to discuss having it advertised.

Once you solve it, you may like to ponder why there is only one solution?

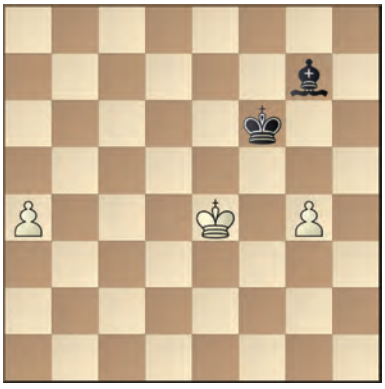
46)



White to play and win

Please don't spoil it for yourself, and do have a go at solving it, but if you are stuck you can look up the answer on a tablebase!

47)



White to play and win

Again, but only if desperate, look it up on an endgame tablebase.

48) Mate or be mated! We always like to give readers their money's worth, so here goes...

White to play and mate in 3
or *Black to play and mate in 4*

49) Here is an unusual position and one you can't use a computer to 'cheat' on (as far as we know anyway). White has just made his 10th move, resulting in stalemate. How did we get here, admittedly with some assistance from Black?

50) And finally, are any of the white pieces on this chessboard a promoted one? If not, explain why. If so, prove it by constructing a game ending in the position.

Answers to the Christmas Quiz will appear in our February 2019 issue.

A little bird just told me

A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter

Garry Kasparov - @Kasparov63
Congratulations to @MagnusCarlsen, World Champion once more! Valiant fight from Caruana pushed Magnus to show his best, and, unfortunately for Caruana, today he did!

Fabiano Caruana - @FabianoCaruana
This was a hard fought match to the end, and I want to congratulate Magnus on defending his title. I was up against one of the most talented players in the history of chess, and I gave it everything I had. Throughout the championship I've heard from fans around the world and want to thank them for their support. I feel that we put this beautiful game back on the map in America and hope it will inspire a new generation of players. I look forward to the opportunity to make another bid for the title.

Sergey Karjakin - @SergeyKaryakin
I tried to spice it up with 1.b4, but @MagnusCarlsen was boring today! Thanks @photochess for the photos and for idea! And thanks to @vishy64theking who also suggested me 1.b4!

Hikaru Nakamura - @GMHikaru
Considering that Caruana has exhibited generally superior skills in all facets of the match (opening prep, middle game transition, endgames) it would seem a bit odd if he loses this match. #WorldChampionship

Tata Steel Chess - @tatasteelchess
Congrats to 4-time World Champion @MagnusCarlsen for defending his world title in the rapid tiebreaks! We're looking forward seeing you in January in Wijk aan Zee. #TataSteelChess

Pelletier Yannick - @PelletierChess
At the highest level nowadays, one must forget about white or black. Top players' opening preparation is so deep that they generally neutralize each other. The concept of white fighting for an opening advantage is obsolete. What matters is the ability to play chess afterwards.

Olimpiu G. Urcan - @olimpiuurcan
This is exactly what a quality match between two of the best chess players on the planet should look like in this age of precision. Subtle opening ideas, minuscule edges, zero outright blunders, exquisite defensive techniques, super tight score, nerve-wrecking mental jujitsu.

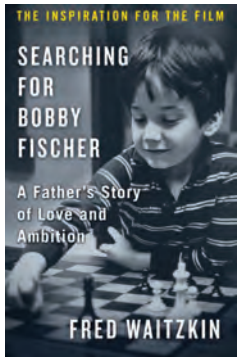
Christmas Reading

Ben Graff presents his favourite chess memoirs – ideal for the long winter nights

There are many ways to enjoy chess, to give the game meaning, to let it become a part of our identity. The initial attraction might have been as simple as the way the pieces looked, the perfect symmetry of the chess board, the sense of having stumbled upon something beautiful and mysterious that then takes hold. Perhaps the parent who taught us, or the child we spend our weekends ferrying to tournaments, led us to chess.

Later, it might also be about the feel of the club room, as the tension mounts and the 'real' world becomes more remote. Friends still with us. Friends now gone. The chance to watch the very best, to learn about chess history, to make our own small mark in this magical world. To leave our own story.

In all likelihood, most of us have never properly put into words why we play. The game is a part of us and that is enough. Yet, as Christmas approaches, I wanted to share my three favourite chess memoirs. If you need a break from the turkey sandwiches and the chaos of the season, I would recommend these books to you, and any other chess player in your life. Indeed, if you have a significant other who does not play at all, these works would most likely help them to understand a part of you that little bit better.



***Searching For Bobby Fischer* – Fred Waitzkin (Penguin Books, 1984)**

When Fred Waitzkin watched Spassky-Fischer on the television, he found himself rooting and cheering as he might have done at a baseball game, instantly hooked on something he barely understood. Yet when Waitzkin started to play, and an opponent resigned without him understanding why, he realised he was not destined to be a chess player. A decade later in the 1980s, Fred's eight-year-old son Josh was one of the strongest junior players in America.

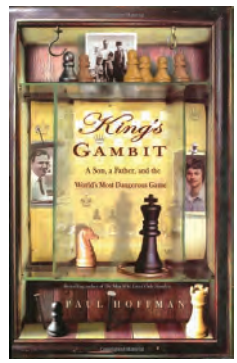
This is the story of what it is like to father a chess prodigy. To live a dream vicariously (and to wonder whose dream it really is), and the struggle to overcome all the challenges nurturing a gifted child places on a father-son relationship. Through some real lows and incredible highs the book draws you into the brutal world of U.S. junior chess, where everything is possible, but the pain of defeat is all too real.

As a story of being a chess parent, *Searching for Bobby Fischer* would be an extraordinary book. Yet, Fred Waitzkin paints on a much larger chess canvas. He writes about the Central Park chess scene, with its array of colourful characters, many of whom are held together by chess and not much else. He sees one homeless master struggling in the snow and tries to give him money for food, but is waved away. The man who had once beaten Tal two out of three as Waitzkin says, had no need for his nickels and dimes.

Waitzkin writes beautifully about the first Karpov-Kasparov match. From the noisy playing hall (that as Waitzkin notes Fischer would never have been able to stand), to being in the press room, to desperately trying to get the moves of the final game of the second match on the telephone. This is one of the most famous tellings of the early battles between the two Ks. Other Russian stories, of meeting with Boris Gulko and visiting Russian chess schools, are equally moving.

Bobby Fischer drifts through the book like a ghost. Waitzkin runs into players who claim to have recently received letters from him that they won't let anyone read. Many have a Fischer experience to share, but what is real and what are just shadows is as elusive as the man himself. Waitzkin travels to Los Angeles in a futile attempt to track Fischer down, dreaming of bringing him back to tournament play. He muses about convincing Fischer that the noise of the venue, the size of the room will not matter, hoping that one day he will show his absence to have just been a tease (Fischer's actual second act came along 8 years after publication).

This is a book about hopes and dreams, and the extent to which all of us live our lives through other people, whether our children or our idols; the choices we make, the things we can control and those we can't. Ultimately this is a story of the redemptive power of chess to bring people together and a father's love for his son.



***King's Gambit: A Son, a Father, and the World's Most Dangerous Game* – Paul Hoffman (Hyperion, 2007)**

Paul Hoffman's book is in part defined by another father-son relationship, but this time written from the perspective of the son. His father was a gifted but undisciplined writer and a games player (albeit cards, billiards and scrabble rather than chess), and a well-known figure amongst the artists, writers, chess players and other hustlers on the Greenwich Village scene.

Paul Hoffman's early experiences included winning against a drunk Rossolimo while his father watched on (later telling his son that Rossolimo might have consumed five bottles of wine during the course of the game) and losing to Larsen in a simul after Hoffman's opening novelty was brushed aside. As a teenager Paul Hoffman began to have strange dreams in which people moved like chess pieces and he did not play for twenty-five years.

The book charts the story of Paul Hoffman's return to chess and his attempt to better understand his now dead father. A

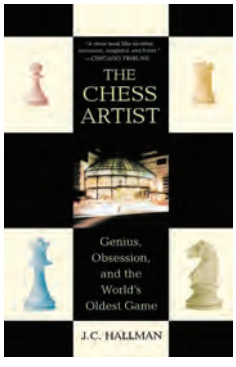
father who his mother tells him had lost many friends after one lie too many, but adding to the complexity, some of his more outrageous stories turn out to be partially true. He was somebody who once won Paul's college fees in a single night of poker, but was also capable of losing big.

Paul Hoffman plays in tournaments again. He meets Kasparov and finds his intensity such that a dinner together leads to Hoffman being admitted to hospital having come out in hives. A later story about a hapless waiter messing up Kasparov's request for room-temperature still water and a chicken salad is one of the funniest you will read. As is that of the ABC Kasparov-Karpov rapidplay match in 2002 and Karpov's team's vodka-fueled celebrations after winning.

Hoffman charts some of the history of chess and describes the American chess scene of the day. There are interesting vinaigrettes on Claude Bloodgood, the inventor of the Grob and convicted murderer, in whom Hoffman sees a compulsive liar like his father. Stories of Jennifer Shahade, Irina Krush and Pascal Charbonneau, and their perspectives on the game are all deeply thought provoking. Hoffman travels with Charbonneau to watch him participate in the knockout stages of the world championship, hosted in that ideal venue for top level chess, Colonel Gaddafi's Libya. The thirteen million to one shot, Charbonneau cannot focus on his preparation and goes down badly, but the story is fascinating.

In one of the book's closing chapters the author spends time with Nigel Short. I was struck by Short's reflection to Hoffman that he had spent months and months of his life thinking solely about how to beat Kasparov, but without any real success. No matter how brilliant a player is, something always remains just out of reach.

This is a book packed with stories about the game and insights into many of its players, but I like it most for its exploration of Paul Hoffman's personal journey of discovery, as he learns more about himself, and a father who can never be fully understood. His final wish that he could have been a stronger player will resonate with most of us.



***The Chess Artist: Genius, Obsession, And the World's Oldest Game* – J.C. Hallman (Thomas Dunne Books, 2003)**

The relationship at the centre of this book is between the writer and a chess master called Glenn Umstead. At the outset, when asked whether being black or being a chess player is more central to his identity, Glenn says it is that of chess player. This sets the tone for the adventures that follow. The story has a number of strands, but two key aspects are a visit Hallman and Umstead make to Elista in Kalmykia (Chess City), and a re-telling of the history of the game and its pieces, which draws on the seminal 1913 work by H.J.R. Murray.

Glenn Umstead's experiences as a master, but one whom is often beaten by players who are stronger still, seemed to me to encapsulate the challenges all chess players face, whatever their level. Hallman wonders if all chess has ever given Umstead is the means of learning to lose gracefully, but for me Umstead represents the true nobility of a player, who whatever the setbacks, always looks to push on with renewed optimism.

In Chess City, Hallman gets to interview FIDE President Ilyumzhinov and the interview starts normally enough, before Ilyumzhinov descends into a ramble about chess becoming a new religion. Hallman's observation that real power is about being able to say whatever enters your head and have those around you not react at all is something that might possibly apply to other leaders today on the world scene. Hallman's portrait of Chess City, with the plastic floors of the Chess Palace already starting to peel and many of the buildings incomplete, is very sensitively done and exposes the gap between the FIDE President's talk and the reality.

A chapter toward the end of the book called 'The Narrow Way', gives a description of the New York Open (in which Umstead is playing), which is amongst the best pieces of writing on tournament chess you are likely to read. From Hallman's description of Umstead's own tournament, through to his characterisation of both the rituals of tournament chess and some of the other players, this is a keenly drawn picture. I particularly liked the snippet on an eleven-year-old Nakamura drawing with the number one seed Vladimir Epishin and walking through the hall expressionless afterward, as if this was an entirely normal feat for a boy of his age. Perhaps ultimately J.C. Hallman is not captivated by chess in the way that the other authors are, but this is a book that will be remembered.

Final Reflections

At this time of the year, when the nights are at their longest and the days their coldest, many of us will reflect on where we are now and where we are heading; the choices we make and how we look on the world around us. These three books might well put into words some of what we all feel intuitively when we think to chess and our relationship with it. The characters overlap, but the perspectives differ, just as in any actual game.

If I had to recommend just one of these titles, I would plump for *Searching for Bobby Fischer,* albeit that might be because it has been with me for a long time. I first read it when I was a junior player and now read it as someone who has a child taking their first very tentative steps in the game. It seemed to validate a lot of what I thought was important when I was younger, giving voice to ideas that had partially only existed in my head, prior to that.

The truth is, all these books make chess sing. There are so many chess stories out there, waiting for all of us to create, but here are three that are ready to be shared now. I hope you enjoy them and this festive season. Happy Christmas!

Play Chess From the Comfort of Your Own Home!

National Correspondence Chess Club

Our philosophy:
"To foster friendship between members"

For Beginners to Grandmasters

A wide variety of tournaments
FREE web server chess
FREE bi-monthly magazine

For application form and full details visit our website: **www.natcor.org.uk**

Contact: Des Green, 93 Eldmon Ln, Birmingham, B37 7DN or email: treasurer@natcor.org.uk

21ST FIDE RATED CONGRESS

Fri 18 - Sun 20 January

The Old Swan, Harrogate, HG1 2SR.

3 sections - all of 5 rounds

FIDE Rated Open,
FIDE Rated U2000 (U175),
ECF Under 135

Prize fund £3,000

For further information and entry visit:

www.4ncl.co.uk

Never Mind the Grandmasters...

Here come the amateurs - by Carl Portman (carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk)

They say that Christmas is a time of magic. Magic is synonymous with witchcraft and wizardry, so prepare yourself for a dark alchemy of chess, witches and one special wizard (not called Dumbledore) for my Yule offering. It is said that witches have 13 goals, which I shall try to relate to chess.

Know your craft: Clearly you have to be comfortable doing what you're doing. Knowing your chess game means playing all kinds of positions from the opening to the endgame. You have to master your art. One must also be able to talk about the history of our favourite game for without the old sorcerers, we would surely remain apprentices.

Know yourself: You know what you can and cannot do, at the chessboard and away from it. Try to develop the discipline of being confident and upbeat before you go into a game, regardless of the opposition. Should you practice one aspect of chess 100 times or practice 100 things only once? That's up to you.

Learn and grow: By this I would say study. The more you study, the more you should learn and be able to apply more ideas in your games. Paying particular attention to our own games is something that all masters suggest we do. When we learn new things, we should enhance our enjoyment of the game. Always be curious.

Apply knowledge with wisdom: Let us be clear. Knowledge is *not* power. Knowledge is merely *potential* power and the wise person knows when to employ it. Knowing when to go down a certain road at the chessboard requires both knowledge and wisdom in equal measure. Keith Arkell is a fine exponent of this. Do study his games. He is one of the best at, for example, exchanging queens early and outplaying opponents with the rest of the pieces, although that is only part of his skill set. He knows where the pieces go.

Achieve balance: In chess and life of course. Chess is all about balance. What Jeremy Silman tells us is that we actually have to constantly be on the alert for imbalances in chess, both when we see them in the opposition's position and addressing those in our own camp. Good perspective keeps good balance. Chess is not life or death – except on the board!

Keep your words in good order: "I should have won that game. My opponent was lucky." We have heard that before. Even Nimzowitsch once said, "Why should I lose to this idiot?". Never blame your opponent for your loss. It's your fault. Be magnanimous and you will be better thought of for it. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.

Keep your thoughts in good order: Think positively. Why do you play chess? Is it just for competition or do you find it genuinely spiritually nourishing? If you lose a few games, just focus on going forward. Set up the pieces and go again. Play the game for the game's sake. After all, we are practising the arts that our predecessors have engaged in over more than 1,500 years. That's pretty special.

Celebrate life: Why not? It gives us the opportunity to play the magnificent game of chess. If we are happy in our lives, perhaps we are happy in our chess endeavours. Chess may be black and white, but life need not be... Introduce colour and absorb the magic of the seasons. When it rains outside – bring out the chessboard and lose yourself in pure enjoyment for a while.

Attune with the cycles of earth: Imagine the idea that the seasons could affect your chess. I know they have with me. For example, when playing in hot summer tournaments, I know I am more inclined to move quickly. Being hot and bothered does not help. In the dark of winter my own play can be slower as I sit and freeze at the chess club. Maybe, just maybe the seasons do affect our mindset in chess.

Breathe and eat correctly: This is obvious for any sport and life in general. Being aware of our breathing is useful for us. Breathing slowly can calm us down. Eating the 'right' foods for our bodies and minds can surely do us no harm at the board. I always say if you eat burgers all the time, you'll get burger chess. By the way, it is heart-warming to note a new trend. It is the introduction in some tournaments of a rule that says only drinks may be consumed at the boards during games – no food. Thank heavens for that. No longer do we have to endure the unedifying sight of an opponent munching on crisps or greedily chomping down greasy sausage sandwiches, after which he (for it always seems to be a man) smears the chess pieces in disgusting grease. Bravo, dear organisers, for that small mercy.

Exercise the body: Top players especially understand the benefits of exercise. Sitting for so many hours for just one game, ensuring there is not even one slip is extremely demanding. Then again us amateurs don't have it easy – six games in a weekend is shattering for many of us, so we have to feel as good as we can in order to cope. Your car runs according to the fuel you put into it, so why not your body? Healthy body, healthy mind.

Meditate: This not for everyone (witches are encouraged to do it though), and I have never tried myself, but if meditation can take us to another place and positively affect the way we think and live our lives, then why not? I must admit I have played many games where I wished I could just be somewhere else.

Honour the Goddess and the God: We certainly have a Goddess in chess in Caissa. Perhaps in a way every chess player is her child. Giving thanks to her now and again cannot do any harm.

Pick out of the above what you wish, dear reader. As we know, Mikhail Tal was known as the Magician of Riga and his chess appeared to be not of this world on many an occasion as his brilliance shone through. Far be it from me to deign to comment on any of his games with any kind of authority, but it seems to me that whatever level we play at we can appreciate entertaining chess. Let's take a look at one of his games, where he wins quite quickly.

It was played in the year that Karpov and Kasparov continued their world championship struggles when Kasparov's star was continually rising. Tal meanwhile had long since had his day, being world champion back in 1960, but he was still working his magic on chess boards around the world.

M.Tal-G.Garcia Gonzales
Chigorin Memorial, Sochi 1986
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6

The Caro is difficult to break down at the best of times, but this is a Wizard we are talking about.

2 c4

I have been looking at this move recently, and I rather like it.

2...e5 3 d4

Immediately asking questions.

3...♘f6

A second unusual move in a row. The records show that Black was a 2500 player at the time. Already White has several choices. Take on e5 perhaps? Maybe play one of the knights to c3 or f3.

4 ♘c3

If 4 dxe5 ♘xe4 5 ♗d3 ♘c5 6 ♗c2 d5, and this from a Caro-Kann.

4...♗b4 5 dxe5

The Magician of Riga, Mikhail Tal, was a fearsome calculator and is the subject of the recent Team Tal: An Inside Story *by Valentin Kirillov.*

5 f3 is the choice of the engine in this modern age. It bolsters e4, but takes the f3-square away from the knight on g1. When we play moves, we often gain something and lose something. One must accept this and be prepared to compromise.

5...♘xe4 6 ♕d4

Centralising the queen is often a good idea. She can exert more power and influence there, even though she may also be more of a target. Tal, in his usual style, ensures that his pieces have freedom and space to develop. Black has yet to activate any of his pieces on the queenside. The position is still pretty level, but I am sure that the psychological aspect of playing Tal would have featured heavily in decision making for his opponents.

6...d5

Chess is a crazy, complicated game. Black could have really mixed it up here by playing 6...f5, but playing this against Tal would surely have been pouring petrol on his fire. Just look at the position after 7 exf6 0-0 8 fxg7 ♖e8 9 ♘ge2 ♗c5 10 ♕xe4 ♖xe4 11 ♘xe4 ♗b4+ 12 ♘4c3! It appears someone has just chucked the pieces on to the board. It might be fun to set up this position with a friend and play it from here, as both sides. Chess should after all be fun, right?

7 cxd5 ♕a5 8 ♕xe4 ♗xc3+ 9 ♔d1

Apparently, White is slightly better. Were we amateurs to play this though, I am sure that the fact that the white king languishes in the centre would play a significant role in the rest of the game.

9...cxd5?!

Certainly this looks like a good move, and I would probably have played it myself, but with the magic of contemporary technology it is declared inferior to playing either the queen or bishop to b4.

10 ♕c2 d4

Not 10...♗b4?? 11 ♕xc8+ and ouch.

11 bxc3 dxc3 12 ♘e2 0-0

At least the king is safe, but the battle is almost over. Black will soon resign.

13 ♕xc3

Such diablerie. If we scrutinise the board we will find that White has more pieces. How did that happen?

13...♕a4+

Black certainly cannot exchange.

14 ♔e1 ♗e6 15 ♘d4

To me, being the patzer that I am, the position looks 'loose' for White, but the fact is that Tal has everything is in hand. The trouble is Black is struggling to find good moves.

15...♖c8

This too looks perfectly reasonable. What might you reply to this? Well, the Magician from Riga waved his wand and played...

16 ♗b5! 1-0

Black resigned here. Let's have a quick look at what could have happened: 16...♖xc3 (or 16...♕d1+ 17 ♔xd1 ♖xc3 18 ♘xe6 fxe6 19 ♗e3 and everything is covered) 17 ♗xa4 ♗d5 18 ♗b2. The bishop-pair will be tremendous in this position. For once, Tal didn't even have to weave a path to his opponent's king. He simply outplayed him until his resistance was broken. Dumbledore would have been proud.

It is ironic that the rock band Queen released *It's a kind of Magic* in 1986, the year this game was played. Perhaps if world champions had a song dedicated to them this would be Tal's. Perhaps Carlsen's would be *Norwegian Wood*, but I digress.

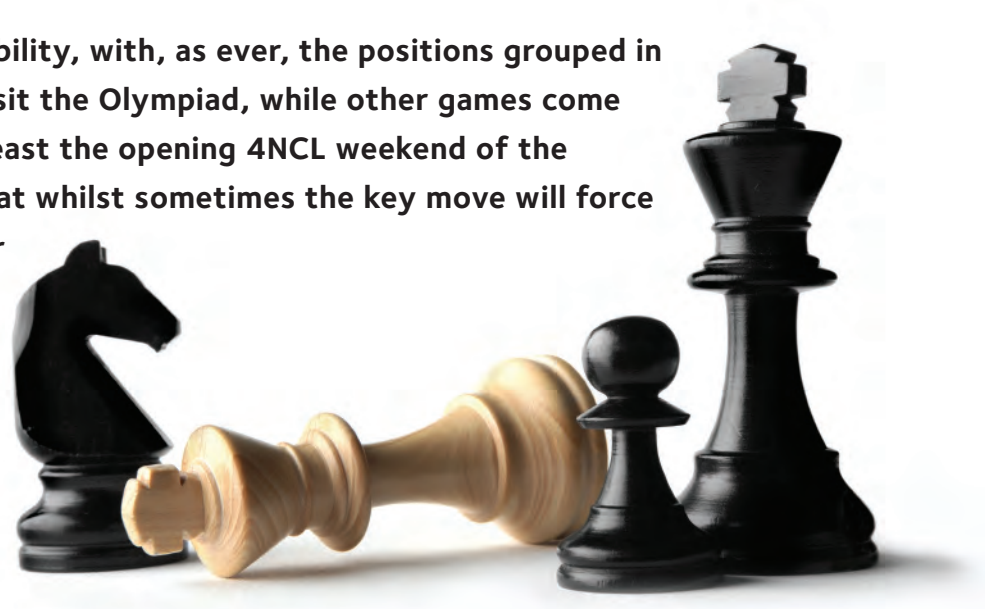
Christmas is a time where many embrace the notion that a rotund bearded individual in a red garment flies around the world with a herd of reindeer handing out free gifts – and he does this all in one night which really is clever. Mikhail Tal gave us the timeless gift of his chess games. People can enjoy playing through these battles forever.

Tal was apparently a very amiable, intelligent and creative man. He considered that chess was above all else an art. You know, thinking about it, Tal is just the kind of man I would like for a Wizard. Yuletide Blessings to you all. May the magic of Caissa be with you.

Find the Winning Moves

24 puzzles to test your tactical ability, with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. We revisit the Olympiad, while other games come from various recent events, not least the opening 4NCL weekend of the 2018/19 season. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just win a pawn.

Solutions on page 53.



Warm-up Puzzles

(1) D.Bennion-P.Anderson
4NCL, Horwich 2018
White to Play

(2) M.White-P.Floresc
4NCL, Horwich 2018
White to Play

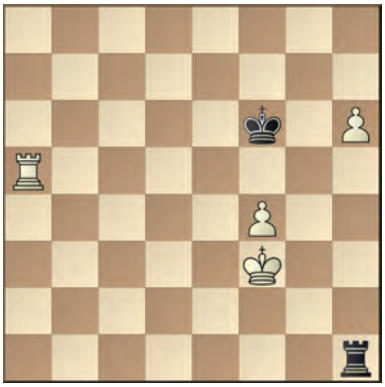
(3) J.Baules-H.Nakamura
Batumi Olympiad 2018
Black to Play

(4) P.Anderson-C.Davison
4NCL, Horwich 2018
White to Play

(5) R.Bates-K.Kulon
4NCL, Daventry 2018
Black to Play

(6) D.Shengelia-P.Makolli
Batumi Olympiad 2018
Black to Play

Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 53



(7) J.Schroeder-D.Vocaturo
German Bundesliga 2018
Black to Play and Draw

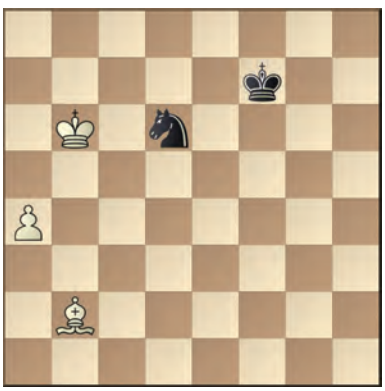
(8) A.Timofeev-D.Paravyan
Russian Team Rapid Ch., Sochi 2018
White to Play

(9) Yinglun Xu-Wan Yunguo
Chinese League 2018
Black to Play

(10) M.Carpenter-A.Ismail
York 2018
White to Play

(11) P.Roberson-R.Müller
European Club Cup, Porto Carras 2018
White to Play

(12) D.Kokarev-E.Vorobiov
Chigorin Memorial, St. Petersburg 2018
Black to Play



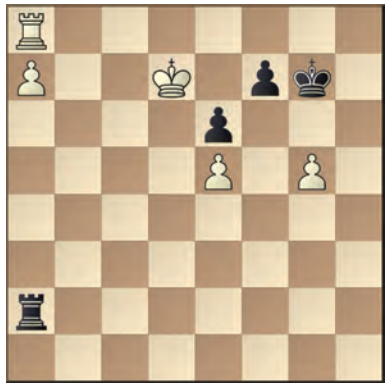
(13) A.Dreev-R.Robson
Saint Louis 2018
White to Play

(14) D.Wagner-L.Aronian
Isle of Man 2018
White to Play

(15) S.Shankland-M.Vachier-Lagrave
Fischerrandom, Saint Louis 2018
Black to Play

Harder Puzzles for the Club Player – Solutions on page 53

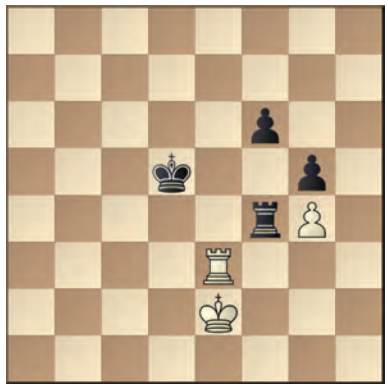
(16) M.Kravtsiv-H.Gusain
Goa 2018
White to Play



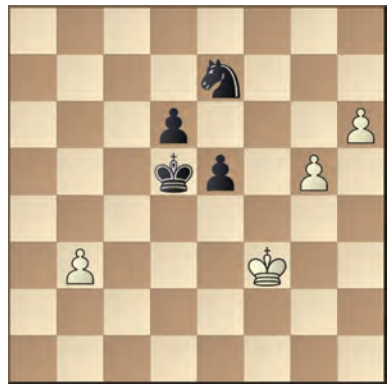
(17) E.Sutovsky-S.Shankland
Batumi Olympiad 2018
White to Play

(18) E.Can-F.Pancevski
Batumi Olympiad 2018
White to Play

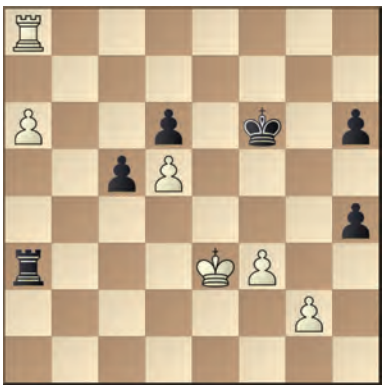
(19) R.Ovetchkin-I.Lysyj
Yaroslavl 2018
Black to Play



(20) E.Blomqvist-P.Svidler
European Club Cup, Porto Carras 2018
White to Play and Draw



(21) C.Duggan-L.Cooper
4NCL, Daventry 2018
White to Play and Draw

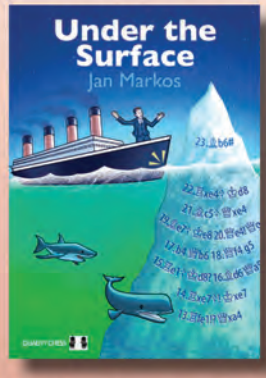


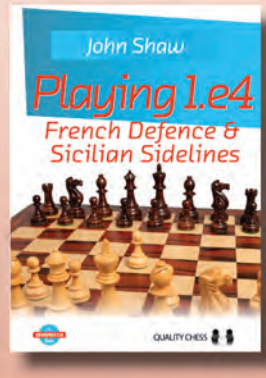
(22) D.Makhnev-G.Jones
Batumi Olympiad 2018
White to Play

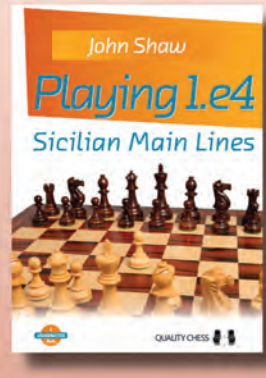
(23) L.McShane-P.Svidler
German Bundesliga 2018
White to Play and Draw

(24) F.Peralta-D.Suarez Pousa
Santiago de Compostela 2018
White to Play

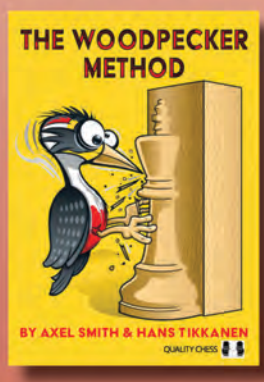
2018 – Another great year for Quality Chess

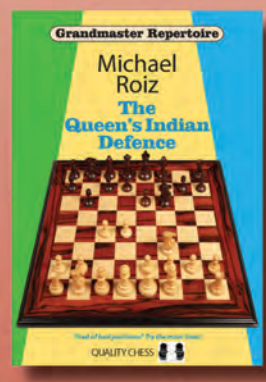






Under the Surface
ECF Book of the Year





Quality Chess books are available from

QUALITYCHESS.CO.UK

The London Chess Centre and other specialist chess retailers

www.QualityChessAcademy.com

Crete, 8-14 May 2019

4* all inclusive hotel with on-site waterpark
400 metre private Mediterranean beach

Your Coaches
GMs RB Ramesh & Jacob Aagaard

Overseas News

CHINA – 26-year-old Chinese no.1 Ding Liren moved most impressively to one hundred classical games without defeat during the 2nd DT Cup in Shenzhen (4-14 November). That actually may well not be a world record since Sergei Tiviakov appears to have once gone 110 games undefeated, albeit against largely weaker competition than Ding faced. Like many a cricketer, the very next day Ding was out for a hundred, dismissed by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. That was one of only six decisive games in the tournament, Ding and Radoslaw Wojtaszek each involved in three of them. Ding, Anish Giri and Vachier-Lagrave landed up on 5½/10, the Frenchman claiming victory on tiebreak.

M.Vachier-Lagrave-Ding Liren
Shenzhen 2018
Giuoco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♘f6 4 d3 ♗c5 5 0-0 0-0 6 ♖e1 d6 7 c3 a5 8 ♗g5!?

Something of a sideline, but the pin appears a little awkward for Black.

8...h6 9 ♗h4 g5 10 ♗g3 ♗a7 11 ♘a3 ♘h7?!

A new idea, but one which fails to convince. Previously, 11...♗g4 12 h3 ♗h5 13 ♘c2 ♗g6 14 ♗h2 ♘h5 15 d4 had given White an edge in Giri-Eljanov, Stavanger 2016.

12 ♘d2 g4 13 ♘b5! ♗b6 14 ♗b3 a4

Black is unable to evict the knight with ...c6 in view of 14...♘e7 15 ♘c4.

15 ♗c2 h5 16 h4!

16...d5

A classical counter to White's last, but now White too is able to react in the centre. As such, perhaps a lesser evil was 16...gxh3!? 17 ♕xh5 ♕g5 18 ♕xg5+ ♘xg5 19 ♗h4 ♘e6 20 gxh3 ♔g7, with some play for the pawn.

17 d4! dxe4 18 dxe5 ♖a5 19 c4 e3 20 fxe3 ♘b4 21 a3 ♘d3

Ding Liren has blown up the position, but bar his advanced knight and b6-bishop, his set-up doesn't especially convince. Now there was nothing wrong with 22 ♖e2, but Vachier-Lagrave preferred to swap the exchange for the initiative.

22 22 b4!? axb3 23 ♘xb3 ♘xe1 24 ♕xe1 ♖a6 25 c5!

Condemning the bishop to a bleak future while preparing White's next.

25...♗a7 26 ♕b1 f5 27 exf6

Beginning to rely on his bishops. 27 ♘xa7! ♖xa7 28 ♘d4 would have been an even stronger way of doing so, when f5 will fall.

27...♘xf6 28 ♘xa7 ♖xa7 29 ♘d4 ♕e7 30 ♗f4 ♕xc5 31 ♗b3+ ♔g7 32 ♗e6

Black is the exchange ahead, but remains in a right pickle due to his rather airy position.

32...♖a4 33 ♕d3 ♖a6 34 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 35 ♕xa6! ♕xd4

White maintains a virulent initiative after this, but, of course, if 35...bxa6? 36 ♘e6+.

36 ♕f1 ♕e4 37 ♖d1 c5 38 ♖d6 ♕e7 39 ♕a1! ♔f7

Desperately trying to escape the pin. 39...♖f8 40 ♗e5 ♔h7 41 ♕b1+ ♔g8 42 ♕g6+ ♕g7 43 ♕f5 would have won material.

40 ♗e5 ♘e4 41 ♖h6! ♕xh4 42 ♕f1+ ♔e7 43 ♖h7+ ♔e6 44 ♗c7

44...♖xc7

Further desperation with mate threatened on f7 and 44...♘g5 mated by 45 ♕c4+ (or 45 ♖h6+ ♔e7 46 ♕f6+) 45...♔f5 46 ♕d3+ ♔f6 47 ♕c3+, etc.

45 ♖xc7 ♘d6 46 ♖xc5 b6 47 ♖c6 g3 48 ♕f3 ♕h2+ 49 ♔f1 ♕h1+ 50 ♔e2 ♕b1 51 ♕xh5! The The French wizard has everything worked out.

51...♕a2+ 52 ♔f3 ♔d7 53 ♖xb6 ♕f2+ 54 ♔g4 ♕e2+ 55 ♔h4 ♕xg2 56 ♕h7+ ♔c8 57 ♕g8+ ♔d7 58 ♖xd6+! 1-0

GERMANY – Like with the 4NCL, a new Bundesliga season is upon us. Favourites Baden-Baden and Solingen have both won their opening four matches. Now largely down on board five for the former, Michael Adams has 3/4, while Luke McShane had quite an eventful opening weekend (10-11 November). Luke outplayed as solid an opponent as Peter Leko, and with Black, ahead of forgetting his preparation against Peter Svidler and unfortunately failing to find the only way to save the game, as we saw in this month's *Find the Winning Moves*.

P.Leko-L.McShane
Deizisau vs Werder Bremen
Sicilian Taimanov

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6 5 ♘c3 ♕c7 6 ♗e3 a6 7 ♕f3!?

This remains quite topical. We don't tend to associate McShane with the Taimanov, but he now responds quite critically.

7...♘e5 8 ♕g3 b5 9 0-0-0 ♘f6 10 f4 ♘eg4 11 ♗d2

11 ♗g1!? might make more sense, and if 11...b4 12 ♘a4 when Black has potential issues on b6 and with his knights.

11...b4 12 ♘a4 ♕a7 13 h3?

Leko is normally extremely well-prepared, but appeared caught out here. 13 e5 is a much better try when Black needs to try and improve over 13...♕xd4 14 exf6 ♘f2 15 ♕f3 ♖b8 16 ♗c3! ♕xd1+ 17 ♕xd1 ♘xd1 18 fxg7 ♗xg7 19 ♗xg7 ♘f2 20 ♗xh8 ♘xh1 21 ♗e5!, which favoured White in Edouard-Neiksans, French Team Championship 2016.

13...♘xe4 14 ♕xg4 ♕xd4! 15 ♕f3 ♕d5

Luke is fearless and has the complications fully worked out.

16 ♗xb4 ♕xa2 17 ♕xe4 d5 18 ♕d4 ♕a1+ 19 ♔d2 ♕xa4 20 ♗c3 ♕c6!?

Ambitious, especially when 20...♕xd4+ 21 ♗xd4 ♗d6 with a clear extra pawn was available.

21 ♗d3

21 ♗e2! would have been somewhat more testing, and if 21...f6? 22 ♗h5+ g6 23 ♕xf6.

21...f6 22 ♗b4 ♗d6 23 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 24 b4 0-0

Rarely does one see Leko in such trouble as White after just 24 moves.

25 ♖he1 ♗d7 26 ♖a1 ♗b5

Improving his worst-placed piece ahead of advancing in the centre.

27 ♖a5 ♖ac8 28 g3 e5! 29 fxe5 fxe5 30 ♖xe5 ♕h6+ 31 ♔d1 ♕xh3 32 ♔c1

White's much more exposed king is also the dominant feature of the position in the event of 32 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 33 ♖h5 ♕g4+ 34 ♔c1 h6 or 32 ♗xb5 axb5 33 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 34 ♔c1 ♕xg3.

32...♕xg3 33 ♗xb5 axb5 34 ♖xd5 ♕e1+ 35 ♕d1 ♕xb4 36 ♖dxb5

Now 36...♕c3 would win, but McShane found something much prettier.

36...♖xc2+! 37 ♔xc2

37 ♕xc2? ♖f1+ 38 ♕d1 ♕c3+ forces mate.

37...♖c8+ 38 ♔d3

This doesn't work, but 38 ♖c5 ♖xc5+ 39 ♖xc5 ♕xc5+ would have been a pretty trivial queen endgame.

38...♖d8+ 39 ♔e3

39 ♖d5 ♕xa5 is a key point.

39...♕c3+ 40 ♔e2 ♕c4+ 0-1

The white queen falls after 41 ♔e1 ♕h4+ 42 ♔e2 ♕g4+ . Fine calculation and energy from McShane.

INDIA – The first ever super-tournament staged in India was the Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz, which mirrored a Grand Chess Tour event in Kolkata (9-14 November). The world's second strongest rapid player, Hikaru Nakamura, reeled off victories against Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Surya Shekhar Ganguly and 14-year-old Nihal Sarin on the second day en route to winning the Rapid with 6/9, finishing half a point ahead of Pentala Harikrishna and Levon Aronian.

Home fans were disappointed to see Vishy Anand finish on '-1' while failing to win a game in the Rapid, if not for dint of trying as shown by the epic 145 moves he pressed Wesley So in a queen and pawn ending. It might not have been his day in the Rapid, but come the final day of the Blitz the 15th world champion was in mighty form, hauling back Nakamura, ahead of winning the resulting play-off. Half a point adrift of the pair's '+7' was Levon Aronian, with 13-year-old Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa finishing last but on a highly creditable 5½/18.

***RUSSIA** – Ju Wenjun retained her world title at the Women's World Championship in Khanty-Mansiysk (3-25 November). That will thankfully be the final time that the world champion has to defend her title in a 64-player knockout, FIDE having announced that from now on the women's world championship will mirror the men's, with the winner of an eight-player Candidates tournament tackling the champion in a match. A no doubt exhausted Ju stared down the barrel of defeat in the final where she lost the second game to Kateryna Lagno, but she impressively won the fourth and final game 'on demand' ahead of dominating the resulting rapid play-off 3-1 to round off a highly successful year.*

SLOVENIA – The World Senior Championships took place in picturesque Bled (18-29 November). Keith Arkell was right up there in the Over-50 Championship until a painful defeat at the hands of the Dutch IM Mark van der Werf ended his charge in the penultimate round. Armenian GM Karen Movsziszian edged out Georgian GM Giorgi Bagaturov for the gold medal after they both finished on 8½/11. Arkell and Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant were a point behind, with Terry Chapman, David Cummings and Steve Mannion three who finished on '+3'.

Czech legend Vlastimil Jansa claimed gold in the Over-65 Championship, nudging out Russian GM Yuri Balashov after they both racked up a huge 9½/11. Scottish IM Craig Pritchett was back on 7½. Meanwhile it was no surprise to see long-time former world champion Nona Gaprindashvili win the Women's Over-65 Championship, with victory in the Women's Over-50 going to Luxembourg's Elvira Berend.

USA – That modern-day chess Mecca, Saint Louis, hosted both the Fall Chess Classic and the SPICE Cup in October, as we reported on last month. It was then the turn of the Winter Classic (4-13 November), in which Cuba GM Yuniesky Quesada Perez was a slightly surprise winner of the 'A' section, but there was no fluke about it, Quesada Perez finishing some two points ahead of Sam Sevian, Krishnan Sasikiran and Jeffrey Xiong. In the 'B' section, the invited guests also did well, Zaven Andriasian and Victor Mikhalevski sharing first place on 5½/9.

The Chess.com Speed Championship concluded at the end of November and start of December. The semi-finals saw Hikaru Nakamura overcome Levon Aronian 17-12 and Wesley So crush Jan-Krzysztof Duda 20-7, which was no mean result considering Duda had previously eliminated blitz legend Alexander Grischuk, while So relatively struggled in the blitz sections of the Grand Chess Tour. The final was pretty close up until the concluding bullet section, Nakamura eventually running out a 15½-12½ victor over So.

Home News

BOLTON – Paul Macklin triumphed for the third year in a row at the Bolton Rapidplay on November 18th.
Open: 1 Paul Macklin (Chorlton) 6/6, 2-3 Athar Ansari (Newport), Jacob Boswell (Cheddleton) 4½/6.
Major: 1 Szilard Tamas (Sheffield) 5½, 2-4 Chris Vassiliou (Chorlton), Mick Norris (Manchester), David Patrick (Halifax) 4½.
Knights: 1-2 Alex Sosnowski (Eccles), Steve Whatmore (Birmingham) 5, 3-4 Howard Hughes (Chorlton), Neville Layhe (Crewe) 4½.

CHIPPING SODBURY – Lewis Martin of Brown Jack Chess Club won the Chipping Sodbury Rapidplay on October 21st with 5½/6, finishing a point clear of Gareth Morris with veteran IM James Sherwin further back.

DAVENTRY – The Northamptonshire town hosted the opening weekend of the top two divisions of the 4NCL. In Division One's Pool A champions Guildford won both their matches, as did White Rose, while in Pool B Cheddleton and new force Chess.com Manx Liberty did likewise. We've featured some of the more striking moves in this month's *Find the Winning Moves* and will have a full report on the start of the 4NCL season next month.

EXMOUTH – The 19th Royal Beacon Seniors' Congress (5-9 November) was once again pretty successful. William Adaway (Dorchester), Stephen Berry (Wimbledon), and Norman Hutchinson (Cambridge) tied for first with 4/5, while in the 'Juniors' section (for those aged 50-64), Mike Waddington (Dorchester) triumphed with that same score, finishing half a point ahead of Jeff Dawson (Norwich), Steve Dilleigh (Bristol), and Robin Moss (Carlisle).

ILKLEY – GM Danny Gormally suffered a painful, rapid penultimate round defeat at the hands of FM Tim Wall at the British Rapidplay Championship in Ilkley (24-25 November). That left the path clear for Lithuanian IM Gediminas Sarakauskas to triumph with a whopping '+8'. Sarakauskas suffered a surprise defeat to weekend veteran Mike Surtees, but was otherwise pretty impressive, drawing with Gormally while overcoming both IM Richard Bates and defending champion, Catalan GM Daniel Alsina Leal.
Open: 1 Gediminas Sarakauskas (Guildford) 9½/11, 2-3 Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Richard Bates (Richmond) 8½, 4-6 Tim Wall, Yichen Han (both Forest Hall), Peter Shaw (Wakefield) 7.
Major: 1 Joshua Pink (Stockport) 8, 2-3 Graham Bolt (Exeter), Gopakumar Siddharth (Essex) 7½.
Intermediate: 1 Bernard Chan (Malaysia) 9½, 2 Vladimirs Bovtramovics (Woking) 8½, 3-6 Noel Stewart (York), Joe Varley (Hull), Hari Stewart (Surbiton), Lawrence Coe (Stockport) 7.
Minor: 1-2 Bruce Oliver (Hull), Ben Crosby (Horsham) 8½, 3 Samuel Parry (Cheddleton) 8.

OBAN – Quality Chess's Andrew Greet triumphed at the Oban Congress (18-20 November).
Open: 1 Andrew Greet (Bearsden) 4½/5, 2 Mark Orr 4, 3-5 Alan Tate, Neil Berry (all Edinburgh), Stuart White (Bearsden) 3½.
Challengers: 1 Colin Procter (Leeds) 4½, 2-3 Jonathan McKay (Aberdeen), Robert Kane (Edinburgh) 4.
Major: 1 Simon Kerridge (Bearsden) 4½, 2-3 Martin Brejter (Paisley), Michael McRobert (Inverness) 4.
Minor: 1 James Dempsey (Dalmuir) 5, 2 Thor Saemundsson (Hamilton) 4½, 3 David Ainsworth (Corstophine) 4.

OMAGH – The Omagh Rapidplay attracted 45 players on November 24th. Robert Lavery (Ballynafeigh) and Danny Roberts (Belfast) triumphed with 5/6, while in the Junior section, Adrian Gilmore (Omagh) and John Sweeney (Derry) tied for first with that same score. A fortnight earlier at the Ulster Masters in Belfast (10-11 November), Danny Roberts had again been successful, finishing outright first with 4/5, half a point ahead of Modestas Razbadauskas (Strand), while in the second, Intermediate section, John McKenna (Belfast South) finished top with 4½/5, half a point ahead of Cathal Murphy (Belfast South) and Nikolia Dimitrov (Skerries).

PLYMOUTH – John Stephens (Exmouth) finished outright first with 4½/5, Steven Levy (South Hams), John Underwood (Seaton), Alan Brusey (Newton Abbot) and Matthew Wilson (Teignmouth) sharing second, half a point behind.

PRESTON – There was a four-way tie for first at the Preston Congress (30 November - 2 December), and one which didn't include Manx-based IM Dietmar Kolbus, but did include rising star Yichen Han.
Open: 1-4 Adam Ashton (3Cs), Brett Lund (Preston), Kumar Sumit (India), Yichen Han (Forest Hall) 4/5.
Major: 1-2 Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), David Boulton (Denton) 4, 3-8 Martin Burns (Stockport), Tony Slinger (Garforth), Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Holden Davis (Lancaster), Sam Davies (Southport), Mark Taylor (Rochdale) 3½.
Minor: 1 Jeremy Brockes (Hampstead) 4½, 2-4 Nikola Baltov (Lancaster), Laurence Tarbuck (Lichfield), Anthony Roberts (Wallasey) 4.
Standard: 1 Charalampos Patsos (Preston) 4½, 2-4 Robert Owens (Formby), Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster), Zechen Yu 4.

SCARBOROUGH – IM Adam Hunt defeated Yichen Han en route to victory at one of Britain's most popular weekend events, the Scarborough Congress (26-28 October).
Open: 1 Adam Hunt (Woodbridge) 4½, 2-4 Richard Britton (Hackney), Michael Barnes (Nottingham), Robert Starley (Leeds) 4.
Major: 1-5 Paul Kendall (Beverley), David Lord (Hull), Donald Heron (Edinburgh), Neil Staples (Banbury), Siefaldin Holi (Wakefield) 4.
Intermediate: 1-4 Bernard Chang (Malaysia), Stephen Lloyd (Chester), Ludi Simpson (Bradford), James Hartman (Edinburgh) 4.
Minor: 1-4 Marc Bryant (Hastings), Noel Boustred (Gosforth), John Foo (York), Simon Killarney (South Birmingham) 4.
Foundation: 1 Zac Tomlinson (Doncaster) 5, 2-3 Ian Dacre (Ulverston), Dave Summerland (West Leeds) 4.

SOLIHULL – The final of the inaugural UK Blitz Championship was organised by Alex Holowczak at the St. John's Hotel, Solihull on 1st December. Top seed David Howell (Battersea) duly scooped the £1,000 first prize, finishing with 13/15. FM Marcus Harvey (Southampton) had an excellent day, scoring just half a point less to claim outright second, with Danny Gormally (Alnwick) a further point and a half back in third.

French IM Sophie Milliet, the partner of GM Stephen Gordon who also on occasion plays for Wood Green, racked up an even bigger score than Howell in the Women's Blitz Championship, which she won with 13½/15, leaving her two points clear of Madara Orlovska (Crystal Palace), with Sarah Longson (Stockport) and Rasa Norinkeviciute (Hastings) a further half-point back in third.

British no.2 David Howell scooped £1,000 and the title of UK Blitz Chess Champion in Solihull.

Solutions

to Find the Winning Moves (pages 46-48)

1) Bennion-Anderson
1 ♘f6+! 1-0 1...gxf6 2 ♗xf5 would be a most lethal fork.

2) White-Floresc
1 ♖xh8+! 1-0 1...♔xh8 2 ♗xf6+ exf6 3 ♕h6+ ♔g8 4 ♖h1 would be every Dragon player's worst nightmare.

3) Baules-Nakamura
1...♕e1! 0-1 Forcing mate with 1...♕e1 2 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 3 ♗f1 ♖xf1# is much stronger than 1...♖xg1+ 2 ♔xg1 ♕e1+ 3 ♗f1 ♕xc1.

4) Anderson-Davison
1 ♘xd5! (1 ♗xd5+! cxd5 2 ♘xd5 ♕f7 3 ♕xc4 would be even stronger, leaving White dominating the board) **1...cxd5 2 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 3 ♕xc4** regained the pawn while going one to the good.

5) Bates-Kulon
1...♖g7+! 2 ♔h3 (or 2 ♔h1 ♕f1#) **2...♖g3+! 0-1** If 3 hxg3 ♕xg3#.

6) Shengelia-Makolli
1...♗h3+! 0-1 A decisive overloading, as if 2 ♖xh3 gxf6 or 2 ♔g1 ♕xe1#, but the result would have been reversed after 1...g6? 2 ♘xg6!.

7) Schroeder-Vocaturo
1...♖xh6! (by far the simplest way to draw and a useful motif to know) **2 ♖a6+ ♔f5 3 ♖xh6 ½-½** It's stalemate, but instead 3 ♖a5+ ♔f6 4 ♔e4 ♔g7 (or 4...♖h1) would be an easy draw, relying on the third-rank defence.

8) Timofeev-Paravyan
1 ♘c4! ♕d8 2 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 (or 2...b5 3 ♕xb5 ♕xd5 4 ♘e5! ♗d7 5 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 6 e3 with the two bishops and an extra pawn) **3 ♘b6 axb6 4 ♕xa8** picked off the exchange.

9) Yinglun Xu-Wan Yunguo
1...♗e2! 2 ♕d2 (2 ♕xe2 ♖xf4 wins the exchange) **2...♖xf4 3 exf4 ♕xf4 4 ♕xf4 ♖xf4** bagged a pawn which Black went on to convert.

10) Carpenter-Ismail
Rather than the meek 1 ♘c3? of the game, White had two strong, standard Sicilian blows. Firstly, 1 ♘b5!? axb5 (or 1...exd5 2 ♘xd6+ ♔f8 3 exd5 ♘e7 4 ♘xc8 ♘xc8 5 ♕b4+ with some advantage) 2 ♗b6 exd5 3 ♗xd8 ♘xd8 4 ♕xd5 ♗e5 5 ♗xb5 which isn't at all clear, but shouldn't give Black quite enough for the queen. Secondly, and even stronger, **1 ♘f5!** which avoids the queen sacrifice (1...exf5 2 ♗b6 would only give Black two pieces for it), and after 1...exd5 2 ♘xd6+ ♔f8 3 exd5 or 1...♗e5 2 ♘xd6+! ♗xd6 3 ♘b6 White finds himself clearly for choice.

11) Roberson-Müller
1 g4+! fxg3 (there's nowhere for the king to go, as if 1...♔f6 2 ♘e4+) **2 ♖f1+ ♕f2 3 ♖xf2+ gxf2 4 ♕f3+ ♔g6 5 ♕xf2** left White well on the path to victory.

12) Kokarev-Vorobiov
1...♖a5+! 2 ♔b2 (or 2 bxa5 ♕b1+ 3 ♔a3 ♕a1+ 4 ♕a2 ♕c3+ when even giving up the queen only delays mate by a few moves) **2...♖a4 3 ♗d3 ♖axb4+ 0-1** The finish might have been 4 ♔c1 ♖b1+ 5 ♔c2 ♖8b2+ 6 ♔c3 ♕a5# – a graphic illustration of the power of the major pieces.

13) Dreev-Robson
1 ♗e5! ♘c4+ (there's no stopping the a-pawn after 1...♘c8+ 2 ♔b7 ♘e7 3 a5) **2 ♔b5 ♘a3+** (2...♘xe5 3 a5 is an important position to remember; the knight can't make it back in time) **3 ♔c5 ♔e7 4 a5 ♔d7 5 a6 ♔c8 6 ♗d6** (it's zugzwang and so the white king is now finally able to advance) **6...♘c2 7 ♔b6 ♘e3 8 a7 ♘d5+ 9 ♔a6 1-0**

14) Wagner-Aronian
The game ended in dramatic fashion: 1 ♔a3?? d4 2 ♕c4 ♘a5 0-1 - 3 ♕e2 d3 4 ♕g4 ♕d5 is absolutely crushing. However, **1 ♖1g4!** would have won (1 ♖7g4! ♘c1+ 2 ♕xc1 ♕d3 3 ♕d1 also avoids seeing any ghosts and wins), in view of **1...♘c1+** (or 1...♕xf5 2 ♖g8 ♘d2 3 ♖xb8+ ♔xb8 4 ♕b2+ ♔c7 5 ♖g7+) **2 ♕xc1 ♕d3 3 ♖g8! ♕b3+ 4 ♔a1** when Black is out of checks.

15) Shankland-Vachier-Lagrave
1...exf2! (1...♗h4! also does the business, although here White might try and limp on with 2 ♖h1 exf2 3 ♖xh4 fxe1♕+ 4 ♕xe1) **2 ♘xe5 ♗h4 3 g3?** (allowing a fairly pretty finish; if 3 ♘d3 fxe1♕# and even 3 ♘f7 fxe1♕+ 4 ♕xe1 ♗xe1 5 ♔xe1 ♗g4 would be quite hopeless for White) **3...♗h3+ 4 ♖g2 ♗xg3 0-1** There's nothing to be done about 5...fxe1♕+.

16) Kravtsiv-Gusain
1 ♗b5! ♖ac8 (a most aesthetic shot; if 1...cxb5? 2 ♘b3+ ♔c4 3 ♖e4# or 1...♔xd4? 2 ♖d1+ ♔c5 3 ♖xc6#) **2 ♗xc6 1-0** Black had seen enough. If 2...♘f8 (2...♖xc6 3 ♖xc6+ ♔xd4 4 ♖d1+ ♔e4 5 ♖c4+ is also hopeless, as is 2...♔xd4 3 ♖d1+ ♔c5 4 ♖xd5+ ♔b6 5 ♖b5+) 3 ♘b3+ ♔b6 4 ♗xd5+ ♘xe6 5 ♗xe6 with too much extra material.

17) Sutovsky-Shankland
1 g6! (the key breakthrough; it could also be played in delayed fashion with, say, 1 ♔c6 ♖c2+ 2 ♔d6 ♖d2+ 3 ♔e7 ♖a2 4 g6!) **1...♔xg6** (1...fxg6 2 ♔xe6 g5 3 ♔d7 is a fairly easy win, as the g-pawn is too slow to save Black, as shown by 3...♖d2+ 4 ♔e7 ♖a2 5 e6 g4 6 ♔d7 ♖d2+ 7 ♔c6) **2 ♖g8+ ♔f5 3 a8♕ ♖xa8 4 ♖xa8 ♔xe5 5 ♖a5+ ♔e4 6 ♔d6 f5 7 ♖a4+ 1-0**

18) Can-Pancevski
Play concluded 1 a3? ♘b3+ 2 ♔a2 ♕xc4 3 ♗xg4 ♘d2+ 4 ♔a1 ♘b3+ 5 ♔b1 ♘d2+ 6 ♔a1 ♘b3+ ½-½, but the remarkable **1 ♗e8!** would have won, as pointed out by David Vigorito in his ChessPublishing column, and if 1...♘b3+ (or 1...♕h3 2 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 3 ♖xh3 ♖xe8 4 ♖f7 and wins) 2 axb3 axb3+ 3 ♗a4.

19) Ovetchkin-Lysyj
1...e3! (an excellent undermining shot and much stronger than 1...♖xb6 2 ♖xb6 hxg3 3 fxg3 ♕h5 4 ♖b2 ♖c6 5 ♕f1) **2 ♖xe6** (not 2 ♗xe3? ♖xe3! 3 fxe3 hxg3 4 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 5 ♔f1 ♖e8, while White finds himself a clear pawn down in the event of 2 ♕f1 exf2+ 3 ♗xf2 ♕xf1+ 4 ♔xf1 ♖xe2) **2...exf2+ 3 ♗xf2 ♕xe6 4 gxh4?** (a better defence was 4 ♕d4 hxg3 5 hxg3, although after 5...♗xe2 6 ♖e1 ♖c4 Black is a pawn ahead and with the much safer king, as pointed out by Glenn Flear) **4...♗xe2 5 ♕d2? ♕g6+ 0-1**

20) Blomqvist-Svidler
White must stay active: **1 ♖d3+!** (1 ♖g3? ♖a4! was already lost in the game where Svidler displayed exemplary technique: 2 ♖f3 ♖e4+ 3 ♔d3 ♖f4! 4 ♖g3 ♖a4 5 ♔e2 ♔e4 6 ♖e3+ ♔f4 7 ♖f3+ ♔xg4 8 ♖xf6 ♖a2+ 9 ♔f1 ♔g3 10 ♖f8 g4 11 ♖g8 ♖a1+ 12 ♔e2 ♖g1 13 ♖h8 ♔g2 14 ♖g8 g3 15 ♖h8 ♖a1 16 ♖h7 ♔g1 0-1) **1...♔e5 2 ♖e3+!** holds, since as pointed out by Sam Collins, **2...♖e4 3 ♔f3 ♖xe3+ 4 ♔xe3** would give White the opposition and a draw.

21) Duggan-Cooper
1 h7! (1 b4! e4+ 2 ♔f4 ♘g6+ 3 ♔f5 also draws, but not the 1 ♔g4? ♔e6! of the game where Black proved too fast after 2 b4 d5 3 b5 d4 4 h7 ♘g6 5 b6 d3) **1...♘g6 2 b4 e4+ 3 ♔g4 e3** (or 3...♔e6 4 b5 ♔f7 5 b6 ♔g7 6 b7 ♘e5+ 7 ♔f4 ♘c6 8 ♔xe4 ♔xh7 9 ♔d5) **4 ♔f3 ♔d4 5 ♔e2 ♔e4 6 b5 d5 7 b6** and now Black must continue being precise with **7...♘f4+!** (7...d4? 8 h8♕! ♘xh8 9 b7 d3+ 10 ♔d1 wins) **8 ♔d1** (or 8 ♔e1 ♘g2+ 9 ♔e2! ♘f4+) **8...♔d3 9 h8♕ e2+ 10 ♔e1 ♘g2+ 11 ♔f2 e1♕+ 12 ♔xg2 ♕e4+**, which forces perpetual check.

22) Makhnev-Jones
1 ♔f2! (the only winning move; instead, the game saw 1 ♔d2? ♔e5 2 f4+ ♔d4! when the onus was on White to have to be careful to draw, play concluding: 3 f5? ♖a2+ 4 ♔e1 ♖xg2 5 ♖h8 h3 6 ♖xh6 h2 7 a7 ♖a2 8 ♖xh2 ♖xa7 9 ♖d2+ ♔e5 10 ♔f2 ♖f7 0-1) **1...♔e5** (likewise, if 1...♖a2+ 2 ♔f1 c4 3 a7 ♔g7 4 ♔e1, coming to halt the c-pawn, or here 2...♖a1+ 3 ♔e2 ♔e5 4 f4+! ♔e4 5 f5 ♖a2+ 6 ♔e1 when one of the a- or f-pawns will

queen) **2 f4+!** ♔**xd5** (2...♔xf4 3 a7 ♖a2+ 4 ♔e1 leaves Black unable to avoid a deadly check) **3 f5 c4 4 f6** ♔**e6 5 a7!** and after **5...**♔**xf6 6** ♖**f8+** ♔**e5 7 a8**♕ ♖**xa8 8** ♖**xa8** ♔**d4 9** ♔**e2** the win shouldn't be too difficult.

23 McShane-Svidler

Unfortunately, Luke lost his way in this highly complex position: **1** ♕**e3? g6! 2 g4** ♗**g7 3** ♔**g2** ♘**c5 4 b4** ♘**cd7 5** ♗**d2** ♖**c8 6** ♗**xd7** ♘**xd7 7 c5 dxc5 0-1**. Instead, 1 ♕d1! would have threatened 2 ♗g5+ and maintained the balance: for example, 1...♕a7 (1...♕a8?! 2 ♘d4 is risky only for Black, as shown by 2...g6 3 f3 ♘c5? 4 b4 ♘cd7 5 ♘c6+ ♔e8 6 c5! when the pin and queenside pawns should prove decisive) 2 c8♕! ♘xc8 3 ♘d4 (Black is a whole rook ahead, but unable to escape the upcoming perpetual check) 3...♕c7 (3...♕c5?! 4 ♘c6+ ♔f6 would be rather risky, although after 5 ♗e3 ♕f5 6 ♘d4 with 6...♘xf2! 7 ♗xf2 ♕e4 8 ♕f1 g5 9 ♗c6 ♕g6 Black may somehow be able to scramble his way towards a draw) 4 ♘c6+ ♔e8 5 ♘d4+ ♔e7 6 ♘c6+ and it's a draw, since Black cannot allow either of 6...♔d7? 7 ♕h5 g6 8 ♕h4! or, more obviously, 6...♔f6?? 7 ♕f3+.

24) Peralta-Suarez Pousa

1 ♗**xh6! gxh6 2** ♖**h3!** (2 ♕xh6 ♗f6! would be much less clear) **2...**♗**b4+** (desperation, but if now 2...♗f6 3 exf6 ♕xf6 4 ♖g3+ ♔h8 5 ♕xe8 and wins) **3 axb4** ♖**e7 4** ♕**xh6** ♖**g7 5** ♖**a3!?** ♘**h7** (5...♕e7 was better, as pointed out by John Emms, although after his further 6 ♘d2! ♘h7 7 ♖hg3 ♔h8 8 ♖xg7 ♕xg7 9 ♕xe6 Black would not have survived in any case) **6** ♖**g3 1-0**

This Month's New Releases

Checkmate: TV Series One
3 DVD set; running time: 9 hours
Checkmate TV Show Ltd.
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

Many readers will have fond memories of the BBC series *The Master Game*, which brought chess to TV in an accessible way back in the 1970s and 1980s. The trump card of the production was the recreation of the players' thoughts and the way in which the entire game was condensed into an easily digested bite-sized cultural chunk.

The format has been overdue a revival, which is why the *Checkmate* project was greeted with enthusiasm. The presenters are Simon Williams and Anna Richardson. The former is, of course, the famous 'Ginger GM' who is already well-known to chess players via his own DVDs and other outlets. The latter is, perhaps, best known as the anchor and only permanently clothed person on Channel 4's *Naked Attraction*. Richardson and Williams work well together.

The programme, billed as 'The Master Game for a new generation', features a tournament of ten players: Nigel Short, Richard Rapport, Arkadij Naiditsch, Tiger Hillarp Persson, Igor Lysyj, Ju Wenjun, Irina Krush, Nino Maisuradze, Elisabeth Paehtz, and Jovanka Houska. Nigel Short represents an historical link to *The Master Game* and is likely to remain the only player to appear on both programmes (indeed, one of the DVD extras is an old episode of *The Master Game* featuring Short).

This is a three-disc set, with the first two covering the tournament and the third disc showcasing an extraordinary nine hours of game analysis by Simon Williams. There is no doubt at all that the set represents excellent value for money.

A typical show in this series starts with travelogue-style shots of Gozo, the sister island of Malta, followed by Simon Williams teaching the basic moves of a piece to co-presenter Anna Richardson. There is also a run-through of the eight players. It is only then that attention turns to the actual games. The intention of appealing to the broadest possible audience is admirable, but this is a case of trying to cram in too much over a short period of time. The core audience will already know how to play chess and will be frustrated by the wait to reach the real action.

TV shows used to assume a lot more of their audience (go and watch some older documentaries, such as *The World at War*, to see how it was done before everything was dumbed down). On the subject of dumbing down, presenters should avoid the use of sloppy words such as 'dosh' and 'guys'. There is another issue with Simon Williams referring to rooks and bishops as guillotines and snipers respectively.

There is scope for improvement elsewhere too. The shoehorned graphics utilised to switch scenes lack subtlety. More time should have been spent watching the actual over-the-board footage and hearing the thoughts of the players, rather than cutting back to the presenters every couple of minutes. Simplicity was one of the great strengths of *The Master Game* and that is why the old show still stands the test of time. The problem with trying to cover all bases in each *Checkmate* show catches up with the production at the end, as the sixth and final episode has the unenviable task of wrapping up the tournament coverage which, up until that point, had only reached the halfway mark.

This may sound a shade on the critical side, but it should be taken as constructive. The chess action is entertaining; we just need to see more of it happening. The games are very interesting too. Perhaps the extra pressure of the cameras is to blame for some unusual errors, such as the one seen in the following position.

T.Hillarp Persson-N.Short
Gozo 2015

White intended to castle here, but somehow managed to let go of the king on f1. The move stood and Short consequently gained an advantage.

It would not be sporting to name the winner of the tournament here as most readers will not have seen any of this series, even though it was shot back in 2015.

Overall, this is a very good start and hopefully the second series will sharpen up the soft edges to give a tighter feel and bring the main strength – the games themselves – into a much tighter focus.

Sean Marsh

Closing Gambit: 1978 –
Korchnoi versus Karpov and the Kremlin
Alan Byron (director), DVD,
running time: 1 hour, 25 minutes
Screenbound Productions
RRP £14.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.49**

2018 brought a number of notable anniversaries, from the end of The Great War

to Elvis's '68 Comeback Special and many others in between. For the chess world, it brought a commemoration of the infamous Karpov-Korchnoi title match, played in Baguio City in the Philippines, back in 1978.

The clash was notable for numerous reasons. It was Karpov's first title match, even though he had been the champion since 1975. It also featured the Soviet Union's golden boy in action against the dreaded dissident, Viktor Korchnoi, who had been anything but quiet since seeking political asylum in Amsterdam in 1976.

Korchnoi had won successive Candidates matches against former colleagues Petrosian, Polugaevsky and Spassky to reach the final. Finding his best form at the age of 47 was a phenomenal achievement by anyone's standards (later Kasparov would be long retired at that age), but how would he fare against the machine-like Karpov, backed up by the might of the Soviet chess empire?

To cut a long story short, Korchnoi fought back from 2-5 down (this was back in the days when draws were not counted and six wins were required to win the match), to equalise the match before being completely outplayed in the fateful 32nd game. It is strange to think there was even more drama in Baguio City than in Reykjavik just six years before – and who would have believed, back in 1972, that the very next title match would be contested without Fischer or Spassky?

The documentary is not afraid to spend time building up the context of the clash, including some coverage of the 1974 Candidates Final between Karpov and Korchnoi (essentially a title match, as it was already looking likely Fischer would decline the conditions of the 1975 match). The downside of this is that it takes approximately half of the running time to reach Baguio City. There is so much to cover that this could have easily been extended to at least twice the length of the DVD.

There is an early attempt to compare the match to the contemporary Ali-Frazier 'Thrilla in Manila' bout of 1975, but it doesn't work and is quickly dropped. The footage of the match is, however, very welcome. It is a reminder of just how grand title matches were, with the massive names of the players displayed very prominently behind them.

Various people are interviewed, including Stean, Keene, Sosonko and Anand. Kasparov pops up occasionally, with his own agenda (as usual), keen to describe the shenanigans surrounding the match as "A clear demonstration of KGB dirty tricks". Their memories and opinions are all very interesting, but the most important person to offer his thoughts is Karpov himself, who comes across as a blameless and avuncular character. Clearly, this is far from the truth and he rather 'gets away with it' on this occasion. We could have done with a lot more interview footage of Korchnoi to balance the coverage; it is a real shame he was not the subject of an in-depth interview purely on the subject of Baguio while he was still around.

There is still plenty of ground left uncovered, even though plenty of boxes are ticked: the yoghurt; the cigar and soap incident; Dr. Zukhar, the infamous parapsychologist; the Ananda Marga Gurus; and various other outrageous aspects of the match. Korchnoi invested so much time and energy on off-board activities that he may well have been distracted on occasion at the board.

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov
5th matchgame, Baguio City 1978

Korchnoi is winning, but in severe time-trouble he erred with **55 ♗e4+?** and Karpov somehow survived to draw after 124 moves. Korchnoi could have forced checkmate in eight moves, starting with 55 ♗f7+.

On the other hand, all of the extraordinary incidents and aspects of the match are exactly why it retains such an interest all these years on.

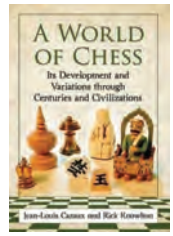
Despite having a running time of just over 80 minutes, this documentary represents an admirable effort. However, a longer running time would have enabled a much more in-depth coverage, without running dry. As it stands, we have a documentary that is definitely entertaining, instructive and well worth the viewer's time, but in truth it only really scratches the surface. Recommended viewing, nonetheless.

Sean Marsh

A Complete Repertoire for Black for Strategically Minded Players
Yelena Dembo & Johan Hellsten,
516 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

At first thought the Grünfeld and Sicilian Kan might not seem like natural bed fellows, but they are both certainly strategic, as well as dynamic in nature, and both have long formed key components of the repertoire of Peter Svidler. As such, quite possibly Everyman Chess were entirely correct to package up *Play the Grünfeld* along with *Play the Sicilian Kan* in their latest amalgamation work.

Also just out in the same series and also retailing at £19.99 (Subscribers – £17.99) is *A Complete Guide to Benoni Systems and Structures* by Raetsky, Chetverik and Vegh.

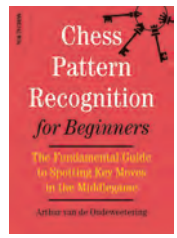


A World of Chess
Jean-Louis Cazaux & Rick Knowlton,
408 pages, paperback
RRP £44.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £40.45**

McFarland might have had a fairly quiet year, but their latest work offers something different from their standard historical works. The French and American authors look at our favourite game's 'Development and Variations through Centuries and Civilizations'. Cazaux takes a deep look at the origins of chess, while Knowlton is something of an expert on chess variants of which he discusses a great number. As usual for McFarland, lavish illustrations abound.

Chess Opening Traps for Kids
Graham Burgess, 128 pages, paperback
RRP £12.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.25**

With a similar cover and layout to the best-selling *How to Beat Your Dad at Chess* comes this new work from Gambit Publications, released in time for the Christmas market. Burgess aims to show juniors how to play the opening stage of the game. He breaks down his coverage into 100 sections, most featuring a basic opening trap followed by a more complex example. The result is an instructive guide, as well as an entertaining read.



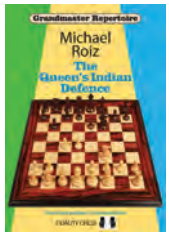
Chess Pattern Recognition for Beginners
Arthur van de Oudeweetering,
224 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The Dutch IM follows up his earlier acclaimed works, *Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition* and *Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition*, by attempting the same approach for those fairly new to the game. Once again van de Oudeweetering's focus is pattern recognition and building blocks, whether he is discussing development in the opening or basic forms of attack.

Foxy 187: The Learn King's Indian in 1 hour for the Tournament Player
Andrew Martin, Foxy DVD,
running time: 84 minutes
SPECIAL PRICE £12.95

If anyone is going to be able to present the key ideas behind the King's Indian while mapping out the beginnings of a repertoire in little more than an hour, it is that highly experienced, popular presenter Andrew Martin, who here draws heavily on the games of Hikaru Nakamura.

Also new in the same series and available too for just £12.95 is Martin's *Foxy 188: The Sicilian Najdorf in 1 hour for the Tournament Player*.



Grandmaster Repertoire: The Queen's Indian Defence
Michael Roiz, 424 pages, paperback
RRP £22.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

The Israeli Grandmaster and theoretician follows up his earlier Nimzo-Indian repertoire for Quality Chess by mapping out a sister repertoire with 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6. Once again, the explanation is clear and the theoretical coverage, deep. If you want a dependable line to go with the Nimzo-Indian, one in good theoretical shape, but not too dry and so easily possible to play for a win with, then Roiz's coverage of the Queen's Indian might well fit the bill. Do note as well that if you'd like a copy in hardback version, that too is available for an extra £4.00.

Mega Database 2019
ChessBase PC-DVD
RRP £164.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £148.49**

Last month we listed the various new *ChessBase 15* packages. Those happy with their existing program may, however, still want to purchase a new database. The latest version of the *Mega Database* contains some 7.6 million games, of which 72,000 are annotated. There's also a new version of the Playerbase and included too is access to a year's worth of download updates, which should add 250,000 or so games to *Mega Database 2019* during the course of 2019.

Those looking to upgrade from *Mega Database 2018* may do so for £64.95 (Subscribers – £58.45), and by quoting the serial number, while those wanting to upgrade from an older version of *Mega Database* or *Big Database* may do so for £114.95 (Subscribers – £103.45).

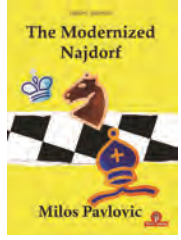
Also new from ChessBase is *Big Database 2019*, which is the same as *Mega Database 2019,* but without any annotated games and retails at £64.99 (Subscribers – £58.49). They have also released *Fritz Powerbook 2019* (£64.99 or £58.49 for Subscribers), featuring 25 million opening positions taken from 1.7 million high-class tournament games and which will really suit those who like their statistics and to study openings in tree format. Do note too that those owning *Fritz Powerbook 2018* and wishing to upgrade may do so for £39.95 (Subscribers – £35.95), and by quoting the serial number.

Keep it Simple: 1.e4
Christof Sielecki, 376 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The German IM presents 'A Solid and Straightforward Chess Opening Repertoire for White', with the club player very much at the heart of his approach. The aim is to put some pressure on Black, but without taking much risk or having to memorise reams of moves. Instead, Sielecki has largely opted for manoeuvring-based openings, such as tackling 1...e5 with the Scotch Four Knights and meeting the Sicilian with 2 ♘f3 and 3 ♗b5(+). The explanation is clear and this repertoire may well prove popular.

Lasker: Move by Move
Zenon Franco, 448 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

This is a detailed look at the life and especially games of the legendary second world champion, who reigned from 1894 until 1921. Lasker is often considered to be the first practical player, but just how true is that? Franco certainly has his views on Lasker's regular doses of "good fortune". Readers may be happy to sit back and enjoy a selection of extremely well-annotated games, but there are also plenty of pointers within which we can apply to our own games even in the 21st century.



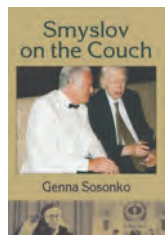
The Modernized Najdorf
Milos Pavlovic, 308 pages, paperback
RRP £27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.15**

As readers will be aware, Milos Pavlovic is quite the theoretician, as well as an expert on modern chess in general. Here he presents a detailed repertoire with one of the mainstays of his repertoire, the Sicilian Najdorf. Pavlovic covers a great number of topical lines, pointing out several improvements along the way, while this repertoire for Thinkers Publishing is centred around meeting 6 ♗e3 with 6...e5 and 6 ♗g5 with 6...e6 7 f4 h6 8 ♗h4 ♕b6.

Practical Chess Beauty
Yochanan Afek, 464 pages, hardback
RRP £26.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.85**

Readers will be fully aware of the creativity of Yochanan Afek, as well as his huge knowledge of chess studies. Afek has certainly composed a great number and here presents his favourites, covering such topics as domination, under-promotion and zwischenzug. Those who really like to solve studies will find a great amount of material, but this lavishly produced work is even more likely to appeal to those who really enjoy the aesthetic element in chess.

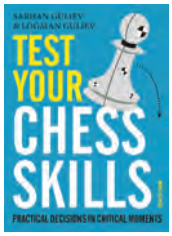
As well as bringing out *Vladimir Kramnik - The Inside Story of a Chess Genius*, as we mentioned last month, Quality Chess have also recently released soft-back versions of *Small Steps to Giant Improvement* by Sam Shankland and Jan Markos' award-winning *Under the Surface*. Those are both available from Chess & Bridge for £22.50 and £19.99 respectively (or £20.25 and £17.99 for Subscribers; add an extra £4.00 if you prefer a hardback version).



Smyslov on the Couch
Genna Sosonko, 200 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Elk and Ruby continue to catch the eye with their recent releases, Sosonko moving on from his reflections on Bronstein and Korchnoi by reminiscing about the seventh world champion. Vassily Smyslov comes across as a warm, highly intelligent and empathetic man. He certainly suffered at times from always seeing the best in people,

not least when David Bronstein blew the whistle over what he perceived were 'thrown' games during the great Zurich Candidates tournament of 1953. All Smyslov fans, as well as those interested in what life was like in the USSR and then Russia after the fall of communism should be in for a treat.



Test Your Chess Skills
Sarhan and Logman Guliev,
180 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Subtitled 'Practical Decisions in Critical Moments', this new work from New in Chess is essentially a puzzle book which looks at a number of important topics. The reader will have to solve opening traps, as well as recognise key endgame motifs and find some positional masterpieces, while the solutions are quite detailed and contain plenty of helpful general pointers.

The Chigorin Defence: Move by Move
Jimmy Liew, 336 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Following his earlier work on the Veresov for Everyman Chess, the Singaporean IM returns to map out a repertoire with another opening which has served him well for many a year, 1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6. Liew isn't afraid to examine White's more critical tries, against which he has more than the odd twist ready, while throughout good use is made of the series' question-and-answer format.

Tigran Gorgiev, Maestro of Practical Studies: 100 short endgame studies
Sergei Tkachenko, 212 pages, paperback
RRP £11.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £10.75**

Tkachenko continues his series for Elk and Ruby looking at chess problems, here focussing on Gorgiev, a leading Soviet composer. As usual for the series, the solutions are usually no longer than six moves, making each position an ideal mini workout and/or piece of entertainment for the casual reader or public transport commuter.

The Grandmaster – Magnus Carlsen and the Match that Made Chess Great Again
Brin-Jonathan Butler, 224 pages, hardback
RRP £12.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.69**

To coincide with Carlsen-Caruana, Schuster & Schuster released this book on the previous world championship match. It is no analysis of the games, rather journalist Butler aims to capture Carlsen at the height of his powers. We'll have a full review next month.

The Modern Endgame Manual: Mastering Typical Rook Endgames
Adrian Mikhalchishin, 336 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The FIDE-approved, Chess Evolution-produced series continues with the highly experienced Slovenian GM and chess trainer tackling some of the most important endgames, rook endings. The well-chosen examples and layout both help to bring a high degree of clarity to what can become, once past the basics, quite a complex topic.

The Modernized Reti (Extended Second Edition)
Adrien Demuth, 448 pages, paperback
RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

Like Quality Chess, Thinkers Publishing aren't afraid to bring out second editions within a couple of years or even just a year of the original work appearing. Here the French GM updates his Reti repertoire for White based around 1 ♘f3 followed by 2 c4.

KEVEREL
CHESS BOOKS

Bigger :: Brighter :: Better ::

To access our 2019 catalogue in pdf format visit

keverelchess.com/books

Order or enquiries via e-mail: jones_r53@sky.com

Chessable

Learn chess books quickly with our science based training tools.

Chessable.com

@Chessable

Saunders on Chess

Follow me on Twitter: @johnchess or email: johns@chess.co.uk

There's really only the one thing to talk about this month, isn't there? The Carlsen-Caruana match stirred up all kinds of thoughts and emotions, and I shall try and deal with the ones that occurred to me here, though there is barely room to cover them all.

On the whole I found it a positive experience. Those who have read my blog post about the venue might be surprised to read that as I thought the venue was dreadful from the point of view of the paying spectators and the press. However, the match itself left me more enthused about chess in general, though with important questions for the future of the game that need to be addressed.

The major positives were: (a) the opportunity to see the two players universally acknowledged as the world's number one and two going head to head; and (b) the fact that both players and their teams behaved impeccably throughout, so that the focus was purely on the chess and nothing but the chess. Neither of these circumstances has necessarily been something we could take for granted in the past, so we should be duly grateful.

Though around half the classical games were hard-fought, the fact that all twelve ended as draws does raise the question as to the viability of classical chess as a decider of the world title. If you read about chess online I'm sure you will already have read a welter of words on this subject, some suggesting substantial rule changes, or making unflattering comparisons with the spectator appeal of physical sports.

I'm not impressed by anyone suggesting changing the rules of chess. Yes, some rules may seem illogical, such as the starting positions of the pieces, stalemate being a draw, *en passant*, castling, etc, but the quirkiness of the game is part of its essence and aesthetic. They form its umbilical cord which stretches back centuries and allow us to compare our ancestors' chessboard efforts with our own. By changing the rules all you are doing is creating a chess variant. It's an overreaction to the problem and there are better ways to address it.

Trying to change chess so that it appeals to a wider audience is also fraught with danger. We want top-level chess to appeal to us existing competition players, plus a slightly wider circle of people who are also interested in the game or can see its educational and social benefits, but let's not imagine it going much beyond that. I interviewed Boris Gelfand some years ago and he was categorical: "Chess is not for the masses". He wasn't being elitist, just realistic. That's not to say that we should not work to make chess more appealing to a larger audience. For example, the London world championship could have been the centrepiece of a larger inclusive festival of chess, along the lines of the London Classic, but World Chess showed a total lack of interest in that.

However, we have to acknowledge there is a problem and do our best to fix it. Rapid and blitz chess still work fine and produce meaningful results. But classical chess is starting to go the way of correspondence chess, having been brought to the brink of ruin by the advent of powerful computers. Top-level players start the game with their heads crammed full of opening theory, and later in the game they have the capability of closing down a game when it becomes apparent that their team's home prep may be falling short, rather like the exchange of salvoes in an artillery barrage.

Talking to other chess writers in the London press room it struck me that the 2400+ IMs and GMs present were enjoying these long-range computer battles rather more than us sub-2400 scribblers who were hoping for more hand-to-hand fighting. At times I felt like a rank amateur or non-player peering in at a rarefied level of chess that I didn't understand – and, frankly, didn't much want to, though I enjoyed the latter half of some classical games, and all three rapid ones.

Some commentators have dredged up discredited ideas such as holding a tournament or a knock-out format championship, but they must have very short memories as these were discarded some time ago for the best of reasons. It's another example of making inappropriate comparisons with physical sports. Chess is not football, tennis or snooker. It's chess and it has its own much cherished traditions which can be maintained without going to such lengths.

Fixing the world championship could be simply a matter of finding the right scoring system. I was impressed by U.S. IM Greg Shahade's idea for doing this. It is radical, but at the same time requires no change to the rules and also maintains the high status of classical chess. Here's his idea: one game at 90 minutes for all the moves with a 20-second increment, with the winner getting ten points, the loser, zero. If drawn, reverse colours and play one game at 20 minutes with a 10-second increments. The winner gets seven points and the loser gets three. If the rapid game is drawn, you keep the same colours as the rapid game and play one game at 5+3. The winner gets six points and the loser, four. If this game is drawn, both players get five points.

The most radical part of this idea is the redefinition of the classical time control. A 60-move game would be completed in under four hours, so it's decidedly brisk, but it seems reasonable given the speed of thought of modern super-GMs. Shahade argues persuasively against current classical time controls – read what he has to say at gregshahade.com. One further thought which he didn't mention and which occurred to me: championship matches used to be an arena where the ultimate truth of chess was sought, but that role has been commandeered by computers and is not coming back. What's left is human competition and we no longer need oceans of time to decide that.

No doubt innumerable objections can and will be made to Shahade's idea. I'm sure readers will be able to think of some. One might be that it skews chess in favour of the current world champion, given his pre-eminence at the quicker forms of the game. But you could argue that is Carlsen's privilege and function as our champion. He sets the standard for others to aim at. Sooner or later someone will come along who can match his prowess at all forms of the game: the title will move on. And the future champion will still be playing the same chess as Philidor, Staunton, Morphy, Steinitz... that is what matters.

NEW FRITZ-TRAINER DVDs

Let GM Nicholas Pert provide you with a fighting 1.d4 repertoire with his two new DVDs. Watch IM Robert Ris' interactive DVD "Extreme Calculation" and become a great calculator at the board!

NICHOLAS PERT: AN ATTACKING REPERTOIRE WITH 1.d4 – PART ONE (1.d4 d5 2.c4)

In this detailed "two-part" video series Pert takes a look at a main line White system based on 1.d4. This series is aimed at the ambitious player who is looking to put maximum pressure on their opponent from the start of the game. In this DVD he considers positions in which Black plays with an early d5. The start position for this DVD is 1.d4 d5 2.c4. This series has many chapters and is a thorough analysis, showing how to fight for the advantage from positions in which Black plays with an early d5. This is a high-level opening choice with many fresh ideas designed to cause problems for Black players in their pet opening systems. 1.d4 d5 2.c4 has been played by practically all of the World's leading players at some point in their chess careers. The bulk of this 39 chapter DVD considers how to tackle the Queen's Gambit Accepted, Queen's Gambit Declined and Slav Defence. In addition I examine the Triangle system, 2...c5, Tarrasch Defense, Henning-Shara Gambit, Baltic Defense, Chigorin and Albin Counter-Gambit.

£26.95

NICHOLAS PERT: AN ATTACKING REPERTOIRE WITH 1.d4 – PART TWO (1.d4 Nf6 2.c4)

The second volume focuses on a White system against openings such as the "Nimzo-Indian", Benoni and Benko. Please note that the Grunfeld and Kings Indian variations (2...g6) are not covered in this DVD. There are many aggressive, fresh ideas designed to cause problems for Black players. "My chosen lines tend to be very attacking, aiming to quickly fight for control of the centre and an early attack on the black king. There is also a lot of original analysis included. This video series considers how to tackle the "Nimzo-Indian" using the move 4.Qc2. Various Benoni lines are considered, the main line, Czech, Snake, Late and Old Benoni. Some fresh, aggressive, attacking ideas have been considered against the Benko Gambit and Blumenfeld. In addition I have looked at how to play against 2... b6, the Budapest and Fajarowicz."

£26.95

ROBERT RIS: EXTREME CALCULATION TRAINING

After the success of the first volume on Calculation Training, Dutch IM Robert Ris continues with "Extreme Calculation Training" — a wide range of new aspects which have to be mastered to become a great calculator at the board! The topics discussed in the original series (candidate moves, method of elimination & imagination) are certainly useful when studying the content of this new video series. Special attention will be paid to intermediate moves, quiet moves, sacrifices on empty squares, mating patterns, ignoring opponent threats, calculation in defence and methods of comparison. On top of that, more practical advice for training is recommended, for instance how to handle your time management and how to visualise the position in your mind during the calculation process. After going through the 13 examples from the theoretical section, it's time to switch the brain to active participation and your calculation skills will be tested seriously! The frequent request for more puzzles has been granted, as Ris has selected no less than 50 games with multiple questions. After all, training your calculation abilities is an activity which never ends; it takes continual practise to stay sharp at the board!

£26.95

Order online at shop.chess.co.uk or order by phone:
020 7486 7015 (Mon - Sat: 9:30am - 6pm, Sun: 11am - 5pm)

ChessBase

CHESSBASE ACCOUNT PREMIUM

CHESSBASE ACCOUNT:
Access the world of ChessBase from wherever you are 24/7!

PLAYCHESS
The ultimate chess experience

LIVE DATABASE
Professional research: 8 million games online

MY GAMES CLOUD
Your one-stop cloud storage area

FRITZ ONLINE
Your browser-based chess engine

VIDEOS
Private masterclasses

OPENINGS
Welcome to modern opening preparation

TRAINING
Calculate, sacrifice, mate

ENGINE CLOUD
Top engine on the best hardware

LET'S CHECK
Knowledge is mate: 200 million analyses

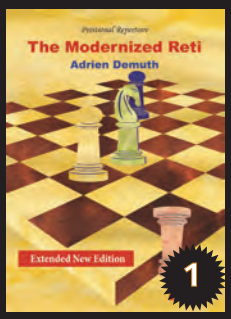
CB NEWS
The world-renowned chess news portal

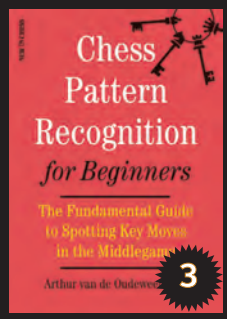
Subscribers Only January

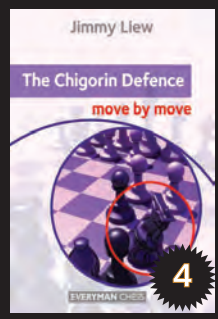
Order online*: www.chess.co.uk/shop - Call 020 7288 1305 - Or use the included carrier sheet

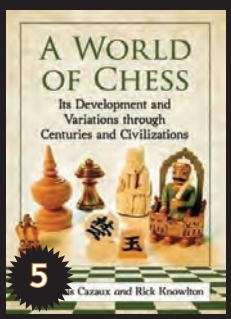
** Enter SUBSCRIBER in the 'Coupon Code' box to claim the subscriber discount when ordering online.*

** UK based readers should also enter SUBSCRIBERSPECIAL in the 'Coupon Code' box to ensure they receive free postage on their order.*

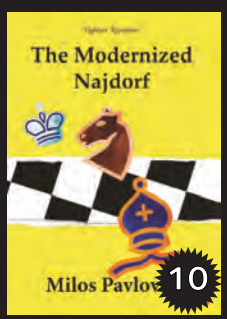


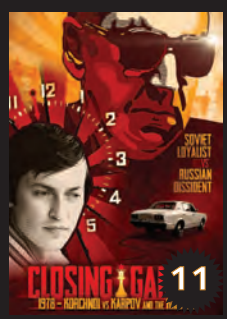


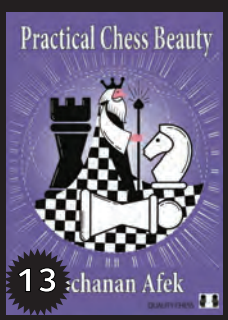


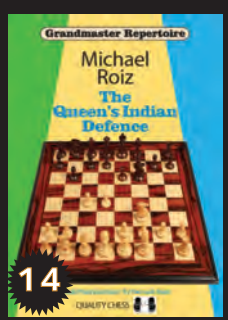


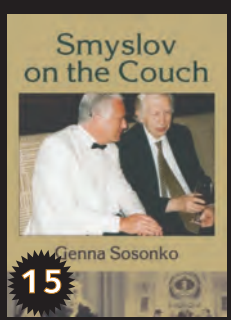
ALL ITEMS ARE POST FREE FOR UK CUSTOMERS

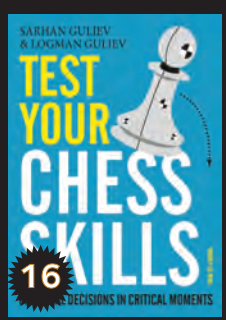


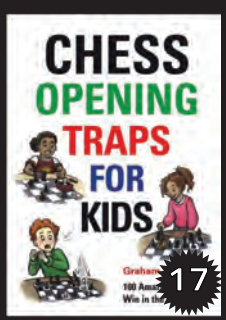












1: The Modernized Reti
Adrien Demuth, 448 pages, paperback
RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.06**

2: The Modern Endgame Manual: Mastering Typical Rook Endgames *Adrian Mikhalchishin, 336 pages, paperback* RRP £20.99 **SUBS' £18.89**

3: Chess Pattern Recognition for Beginners
Arthur van de Oudeweetering, 224 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.66**

4: The Chigorin Defence - move by move
Jimmy Liew, 336 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

5: A World of Chess
Cazaux & Knowlton, 408 pages, paperback
RRP £44.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £40.46**

6: A Complete Repertoire for Black for Strategically Minded Players *Dembo & Hellsten, 516 pages, paperback* RRP £19.99 **SUBS' £17.99**

7: Keep it Simple 1.e4
Christof Sielecki, 375 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.26**

8: The Grandmaster: Magnus Carlsen and the Match That Made Chess Great Again *Brin-Jonathan Butler, 224 pages, paperback* RRP £12.99 **SUBS' £11.69**

9: Lasker - move by move
Zenon Franco, 448 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

10: The Modernized Najdorf
Milos Pavlovic, 308 pages, paperback
RRP £27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.16**

11: Closing Gambit: 1978 Korchnoi versus Karpov and the Kremlin (DVD) *running time: 81 minutes*
RRP £14.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.49**

12: Checkmate: TV Season One - Hosted by Anna Richardson & Simon Williams (3 DVD Set) *running time: 9 hours* RRP £24.95 **SUBS' £22.46**

13: Practical Chess Beauty
Yochanan Afek, 464 pages, hardback
RRP £26.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.85**

14: GM Repertoire: The Queen's Indian Defence
Michael Roiz, 424 pages, paperback
RRP £22.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

15: Smyslov on the Couch
Genna Sosonko, 200 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

16: Test Your Chess Skills
Sarhan Guliev & Logman Guliev, 256 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

17: Chess Opening Traps for Kids
Graham Burgess, 128 pages, hardback
RRP £12.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.25**

18: Foxy 187: The Learn King's Indian in 1 hour for the Tournament Player (DVD) *Andrew Martin,*
Running time: 84 mins SPECIAL PRICE £12.95

19: Foxy 188: The Sicilian Najdorf in 1 hour (DVD) *Andrew Martin SPECIAL PRICE* £12.95

20: Mega Database 2019 (PC-DVD)
Upgrade options available - see page 56
RRP £164.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £148.45**

ONLY subscribers to CHESS MAGAZINE may order items at the prices and conditions shown on this page.
All offers expire 31/1/2019. These offers are POST FREE in the UK only. Please add 20%
(of the undiscounted price) for EU countries and 30% (of the undiscounted price) Rest of the World.